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FREE COMIC BOOK DAY 2012

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Double, double toil and trouble; Fire burn, and caldron bubble---

OH, HEY. 'SUP?

WELCOME TO OUR *FREE COMIC BOOK DAY* "ALL HORROR" ISSUE OF *COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE!*

WHETHER YOU'RE INTO CLASSIC HORROR---

---OR MORE RECENT MATERIAL, IT'S A GREAT TIME TO COLLECT HORROR COMICS!

FROM THE RECORD PRICES PAID FOR TRAIL-BLAZERS LIKE *TALES FROM THE CRYPT*---

FROM THE LATE 1940S TO THE PRESENT, THERE HAVE BEEN A LOT OF *HORROR COMICS*, AND SOME OF THEM HAVE BEEN SO GOOD IT'S--- WELL, *SCARY*.

---TO THE FANTASTIC SOURCE MATERIAL FOR AMC'S *THE WALKING DEAD*, THERE'S PLENTY OF REASONS TO CHECK OUT WHAT'S GOING ON!

ANTHOLOGIES LIKE *CREEPY*, LONG RUNNING SERIES LIKE *TOMB OF DRACULA*, CURRENT INDY HITS LIKE *RACHEL RISING* AND SO MANY OTHERS---

I AM NOT WEARING *THAT*, MR. OVERSTREET!

IT TOTALLY DEFEATS THE MESSAGE WE ARE TRYING TO---

OH, I DON'T EVEN REMEMBER WHAT I WAS GOING TO SAY NOW.

MAYBE WE BETTER JUST GET TO THIS ISSUE BEFORE *ANYTHING ELSE* HAPPENS.

THANKS, AND WE HOPE YOU *ENJOY* IT!

TEXT--- J.C. VAUGHN ART--- MARK WHEATLEY

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

Issue #2 • Spring 2012

The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide and *Comic Book Marketplace* have a long (and we would hope distinguished) history of following and offering insight into the world of horror comics. Whether it's documenting the incredible history of the Gaines File pedigree collection of the standard-setting EC Comics line and their continued strong performance in the marketplace, following the impact of Neil Gaiman's *Sandman*, or observing the zombie-powered success of *The Walking Dead*, horror is a genre that compels us to examine it.

Like movies, TV shows, novels and other media, horror comics can hit us where we live. They can creep us out, cause us to think differently, and sometimes make us leave a light on at the end of the hallway. Sometimes they're morality tales, while at other times they're just fright fests.

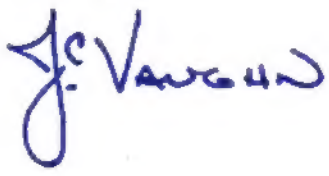
For Free Comic Book Day 2012, we're happy to "share the scare" with you as we take a look at some of the most important horror comics of yesterday and today.

Novelist, pulp author, pop culture historian and *CBM* veteran Will Murray tackles the first successful horror comics from ACG, comics historian and former *Overstreet* pricing editor Scott Braden tackles our "Six Pack of Horror" with a line-up of top titles, stalwart *CBM* retainer Pat Calhoun tackles the often-forgotten Fawcett contribution to horror comics, and Scoop columnist Mark Squirek offers up his own list of "must read" scary stuff.

We'll also look at the top horror comics from *The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide*, the aforementioned origin of the Gaines File pedigree collection, the Overstreet Hall of Fame careers of writer-editor Archie Goodwin and editor William M. Gaines, modern horror writer James Kuhoric, and more.

As a horror comics creator myself – *Zombie-Proof*, *Vampire, PA* and *Bedtime Stories for Impressionable Children* – I'm really looking forward to what we've cooked up for you in this special Free Comic Book Day issue of *Comic Book Marketplace*!

Read on!



J.C. Vaughn
Associate Publisher &
Executive Editor

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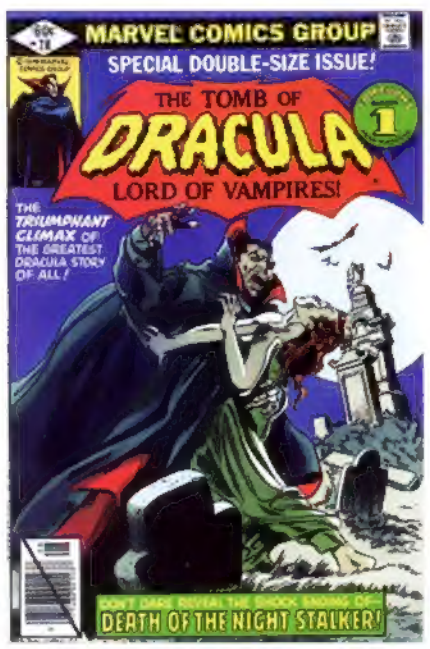
The Greatest Horror Comics Ever...?

From the multiple printings in multiple formats hit *The Sandman* at DC/Vertigo to Stephen King's *The Stand* at Marvel, from *The Night Stalker* at Moonstone to *Rachel Rising* at Terry Moore's Abstract Studio, horror has a big place in comic books, and it's been that way since the late 1940s.

"Horror is an ancient art form. We have tried to terrify each other with tales which trigger the less logical parts of our imaginations for as long as we've told stories. From the ballads of the ancient world to modern urban myths, audiences willingly offer themselves up to sadistic storytellers to be scared witless, and they are happy to pay for the privilege. Theories abound as to why this is so; do we derive basic thrills from triggering the rush of adrenalin which fear brings, or do horror stories serve a wider moral purpose, reinforcing the rules and taboos of our society and showing the macabre fate of those who transgress?" wrote Karina Wilson on horrorfilmhistory.com. And while Ms. Wilson was essaying about films, her points are salient for horror in any format, including comics.

Often overshadowed by their superhero brothers and sisters, horror comics have a rich tradition and have often been created by some of the best practitioners of the comic book arts. Doubt it? Take a look at the line-up working for EC in the 1950s: Jack Davis, Graham Ingles, Johnny Craig, Reed Crandall, George Evans, Wally Wood... and so many others that it's no surprise the work still stands up today.



Like the genres of crime and science fiction, horror comics have always had their hardcore collectors, too. In fact, given Bob Overstreet's devotion to the EC line as a kid, it's easy to argue that *The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide* would never have happened without horror comics. Throughout this issue, you'll find horror fans – including many current comic book creators and dealers – calling out their favorite horror comics (with some surprising results).

As with any genre, there have been peaks and valleys in the realm of horror comics, but taken as a whole, there have been some amazing high points. *Creepy*, *Eerie*, *Vampirella*, *Tomb of Terror*, *Chamber of Darkness*, *House of Mystery*, *House of Secrets*, *Tower of Secrets*, *Weird War Tales*, *Tomb of Dracula*, *Werewolf By Night*, *Twisted Tales*, *Tales of Terror*, *Swamp Thing*, *Hellblazer*, *From Hell*, *30 Days of Night*, *Locke & Key*, *Desperadoes*, *Army of Darkness*, *The Wicked West*, *The Living and the Dead*, *Sight Unseen*, *Dead Irons* and so many others are ready to be discovered in the back issue bins and bookshelves,

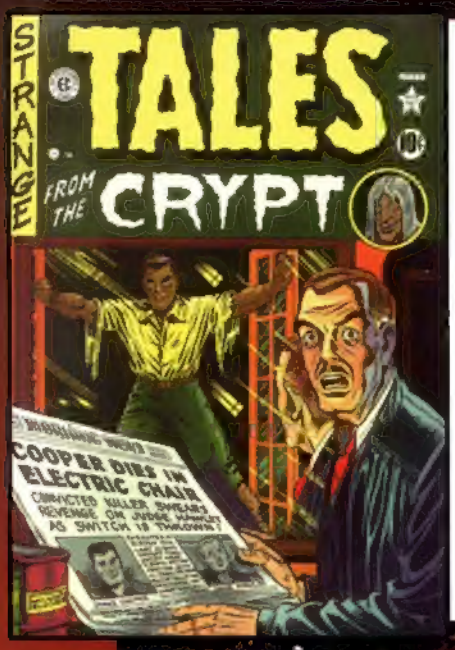
We'll share with you our picks for the greatest – as well as those of others – but in the end it's *you* who have to decide what scares you...

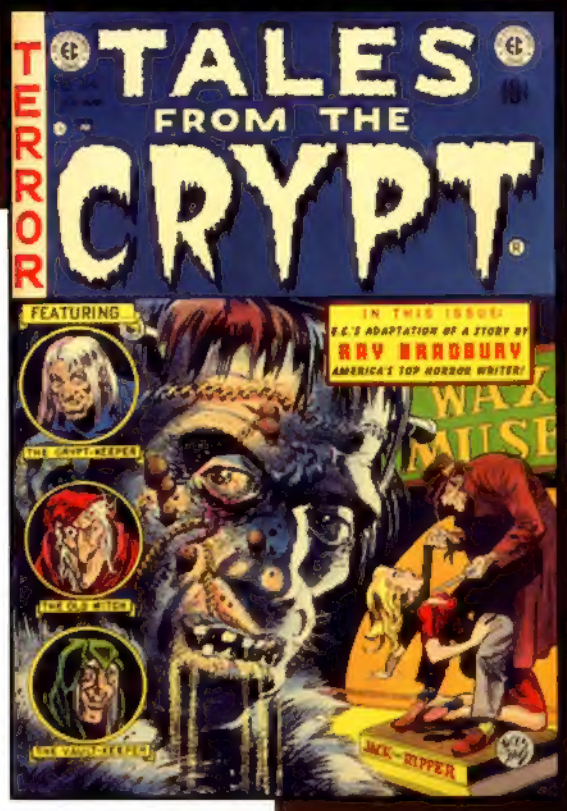
...A Six Pack Of...
HORROR

BY SCOTT BRADEN

Writer, comics historian, and former Gemstone Publishing pricing editor Scott Braden talks with Previews *editor and noted horror fan Marty Grosser about what makes these six series among the most notable in comics history.*

TALES FROM THE CRYPT


STRANGE
TALES
FROM THE CRYPT
COOPER DIES IN ELECTRIC CHAIR
CONVICTED KILLER SWEARS REVENGE ON JUDGE VANISHES AS SWITCH IS THROWN!

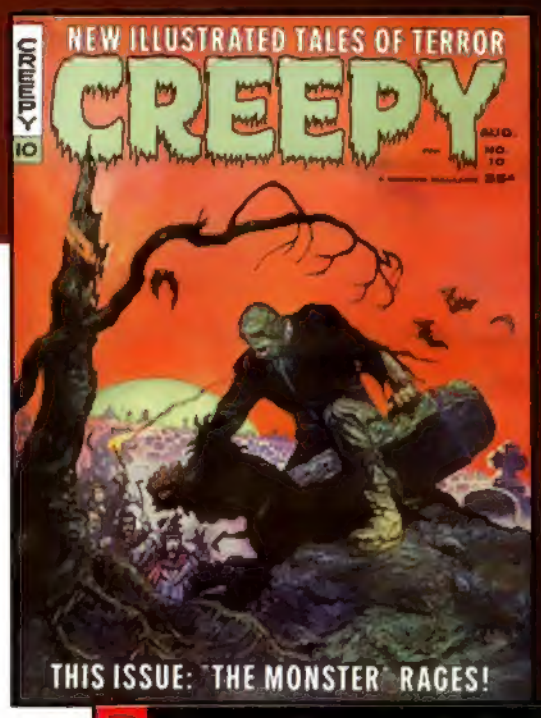


"*Tales from the Crypt* is the horror granddaddy of them all," said *Previews* Editor Marty Grosser. "That was publisher Bill Gaines doing his dark, classic morality tales with exceptional artwork and shock value. I don't think anything has ever matched it in its quality and excellence. *Tales from the Crypt* contains stories that still reach out to readers of today — since the majority of the stories are not dated. *Tales from the Crypt* and the other EC titles are timeless and their message still rings true to a modern audience."

Why It Was Great: Hall of Fame-caliber creators telling tightly knit stories.

Why It Is Still Great: Hall of Fame-caliber creators telling tightly knit stories never go out of style.

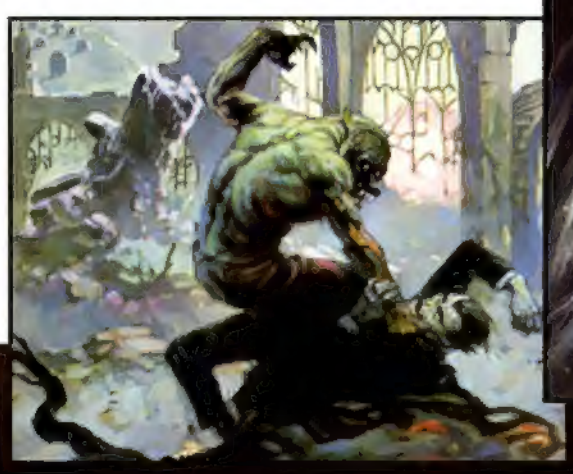
CREEPY

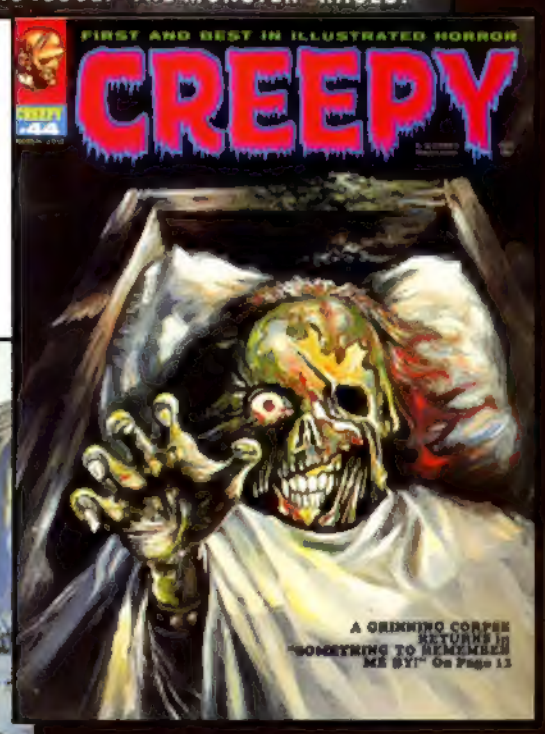


"*Creepy* was the 1960s and '70s answer to the famed horror comics of the 1950s from EC Comics. Jim Warren was the publisher of *Creepy* (and its sister mag, *Eerie*), and he got a lot of EC guys and others to work for him," Grosser said. "Talent like Joe Orlando, Grey Morrow, Johnny Craig, Steve Ditko, Richard Corben, Tom Sutton, Al Williamson, Alex Toth, Wally Wood, and Archie Goodwin, among others. They were going for — and I think they actually captured — the *Tales from the Crypt* formula. With a host — there was Uncle Creepy and Cousin Eerie — books like Warren's *Creepy* had morals to them, but weren't preachy or anything. Looking back now, a lot of the creators worked at Warren and the House of Ideas when the Marvel '70s explosion first started."

Why It Was Great: Hall of Fame-caliber creators telling tightly knit stories. Hey, it works!

Why It Is Still Great: Check out the *Creepy Archives* from Dark Horse, particularly stories by Archie Goodwin and/or Steve Ditko; then we suspect you'll get it.





TOMB OF DRACULA

There's very few readers that wouldn't agree that Marvel Comics' *Tomb of Dracula* was writer Marv Wolfman and artist Gene Colan's masterpiece. "Colan looked like he drew with smoke," Grosser said. "His images just coalesce on the page like smoke becoming solid. The series had a unique style that was probably closest to a Hammer horror film, but on paper. Colan was so atmospheric, fluid, and lifelike — we'll probably never see his like again. There was a wonderful kineticism about the book, and it was like you walked down the street and everything is moving around you and it's all full of life. At the same time, Marv Wolfman took what could have been a throwaway comic and turned it into something special.

"With Dracula, Wolfman gave you a villain that you could relate to and understand his motivations. It's like Darth Vader and Hannibal Lecter. You know they are rotten to the core but you end up loving them because they are bad. It's a safe bad that you can watch play out at a safe distance and at the end of the day you walk away unchanged even though you're rooting for the bad guy.

"Wolfman also never created throwaway characters. You have the damaged Blade, the heroic Frank Drake, vampire detective Hannibal King, and the Van Helsings."

Why It Was Great: A superb blend of Dracula's nobility and villainy, and a truly awesome cast of characters.

What It Is Still Great: Marv Wolfman certainly wrote material that sold better, but these stories and characters may be the best of his career. It has stood up brilliantly.

SWAMP THING

The monstrous-but-sympathetic Swamp Thing was Len Wein and Berni Wrightson's creation for DC Comics. But according to Grosser, "You can look back and see that the Heap, a classic comic book character from the 1940s, was the granddaddy of both Swamp Thing and his Marvel Comics' doppelganger, Man-Thing."

Nevertheless, it contained the seeds of greatness, and *Swamp Thing* was the book that brought writer Alan Moore to American shores in the 1980s. From his fan-favorite "American Gothic" storyline, to all of the one-off stories that fell in-between, Moore transformed what was a fairly routine horror title into a work of great promise that is enjoyed by readers today.

Why It Was Great: The sympathetic monster done well always has appeal.

Why It Is Still Great: The monstrous and mysterious nature of Swamp Thing lends itself well to divergent interpretations by different creators.

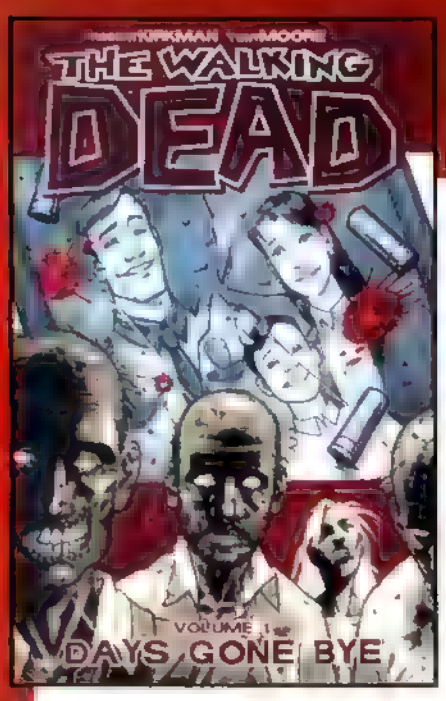
BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

Based on a hit TV show with a seriously hardcore following, the comic book series benefited from the tacit involvement of series creator Joss Whedon. It only truly came into its own when Whedon, who also created the *Buffy* spin-off *Angel* and the series *Firefly*, came on board as writer/producer of the Dark Horse Comics' series.

In print form he and other hand-picked writers told the stories of the never-made Season 8 (and now Season 9) of the TV show, which actually ended after Season 7. The comic book and its trade paperback collections continue to be popular.

Why It Was Great: A clever tweak on the old vampires vs. vampire hunter genre.

Why It Is Still Great: Not that it wasn't good before, but *Buffy* turned out to be the rarest of all licensed titles, one that gets *better* after the show that spawned it ended.



THE WALKING DEAD

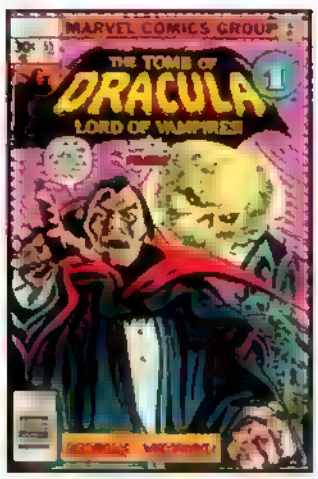
The Eisner Award-winning comic book series chronicles the adventures of zombie apocalypse survivors. But if you were to ask its readers, the book is much more than that. Delving into the lives of its characters, the series' readers get a book that is very action oriented, but also heartwarming and terrifying at the same time. No one is safe in *The Walking Dead* — any character could fall prey to the zombies, or some other threat, at any time. And with creator Robert Kirkman at the helm of both the comic book and the hit TV series, they do.

Why It Was Great: Because so many people thought a black & white comic wouldn't make it.

Why It Is Still Great: While there have been some major changes in pace and a few in the characters between the comic and the hit TV show it spawned, *The Walking Dead* continues to be accessible to new readers, of which we hope there's many.

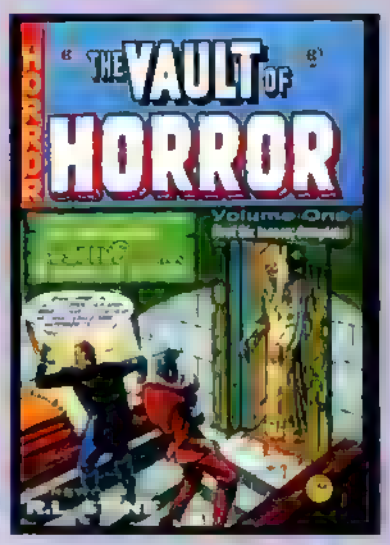
HORROR FAVORITES

Name: Ted Adams
Occupation: CEO & Publisher, IDW Publishing
Favorite Horror Comic: *Swamp Thing*
Reason: I think it'd be poor form to pick an IDW title as my all-time favorite horror comic so I'm going to pretend like I haven't read *30 Days of Night* and *Locke & Key*. The comic book that made me want to be a publisher is the run of *Swamp Thing* written by Alan Moore. I recently re-read the entire run and it still stands as a grand example of what the comics medium can do.



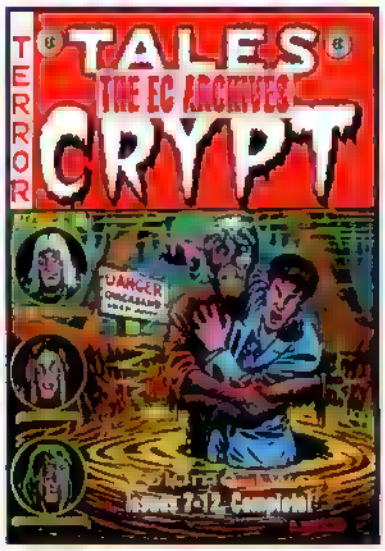
Name: Dan Braun
Occupation: Filmmaker, co-owner of *Creepy*
Favorite Horror Comic: *Tomb of Dracula*
Reason: I am disqualifying *Creepy* because I write and edit it. That leaves one obvious choice; and that would be Marvel's 1970s Marv Wolfman/Gene Colan title *Tomb Of Dracula*. Colan's Drac is *the* scariest comic book Dracula ever drawn. The plots were engaging, the characters believable and enduring; the title spawned Blade. This is the one. The only. Definitely my all time favorite horror comic.

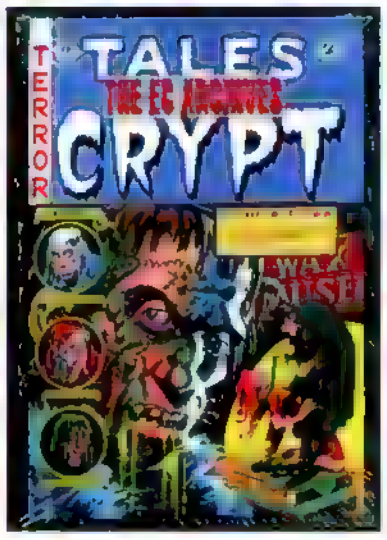
CLASSIC TALES OF TERROR!



EC ARCHIVES: VAULT OF HORROR VOLUME 1 HC
(W/A) Various
Legendary publisher Bill Gaines provided the forum and creators like Al Feldstein, Johnny Craig, Wally Wood, Harry Harrison, Jack Kamen, Harvey Kurtzman, Graham Ingels, and Jack Davis provided the mayhem. Six full issues and 24 complete stories are collected in this full-color, deluxe volume. (AUG073676)
HC, 8x11, 212pgs, FC $49.95

THE CRYPT-KEEPER





EC ARCHIVES
TALES FROM THE CRYPT HC
(W/A) Various
From stories by the legendary team of Bill Gaines and Al Feldstein come the classic horror *Tales from the Crypt* written by Feldstein and illustrated by the all-star line-up of Wally Wood, Jack Kamen, Johnny Craig, Feldstein, Joe Orlando, Graham Ingels, Jack Davis, and Marie Severin. *Volume 2* reprints issues #7-12, and *Volume 3* reprints #13-18.
VOLUME 2 (APR073724)—
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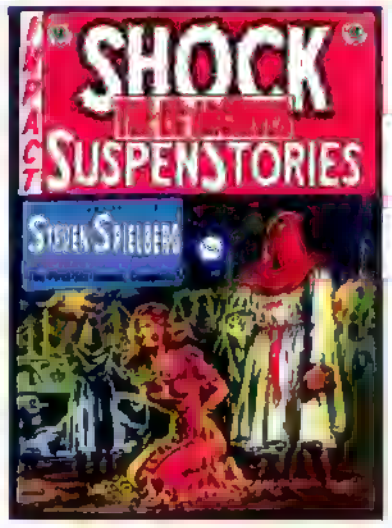
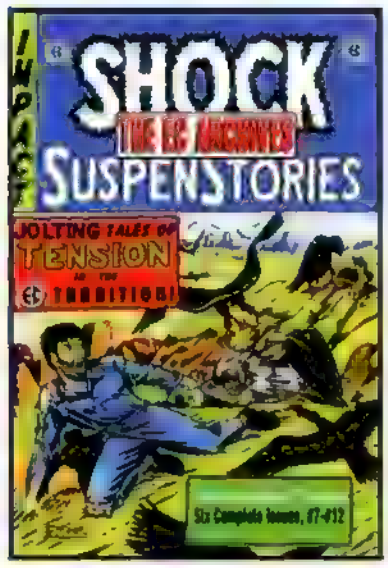
VOLUME 3 (MAR083734)—
HC, 8x11, 212pgs, FC $49.95

THE OLD WITCH





EC ARCHIVES:
SHOCK SUSPENSTORIES
(W/A) Various
These beautiful hardcovers reprint issues of the classic EC comic book *Shock SuspenStories*, originally published between 1952 and 1954. Includes stories by Bill Gaines and Al Feldstein with art by Jack Kamen, Jack Davis, Joe Orlando, Graham Ingles, and Wally Wood. *Volume 1* contains issues #1-6, and *Volume 2* reprints issues #7-12, including the stories "Small Assassins" (#7) and "October Game" (#9) by science-fiction grandmaster Ray Bradbury.
VOLUME 1 (SEP063328)—
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VOLUME 2 (FEB073490)—
HC, 8x11, 212pgs, FC $49.95

THE VAULT-KEEPER

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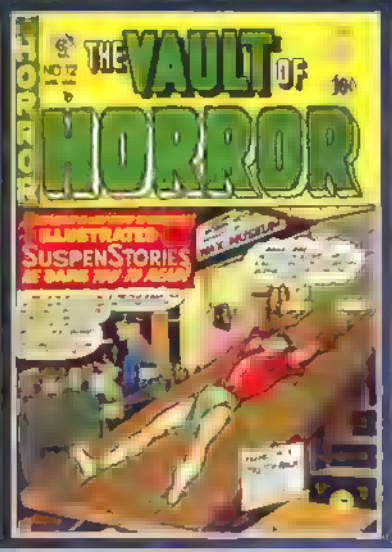
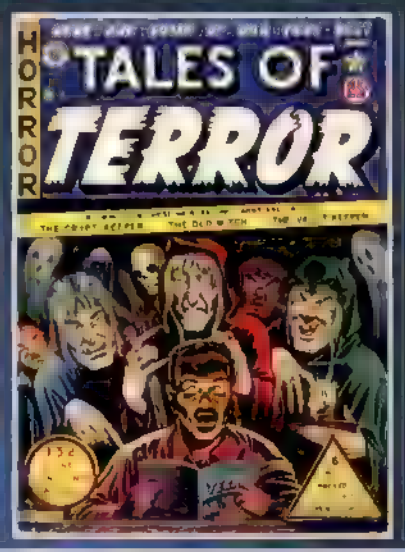
TOP 10 HORROR COMICS

AS VALUED IN *THE OVERSTREET COMIC BOOK PRICE GUIDE* 41ST EDITION



The Vault of Horror #12
April-May 1950
Tied for First Horror Comic
2011 *Guide* 9.2 Price: $8,700

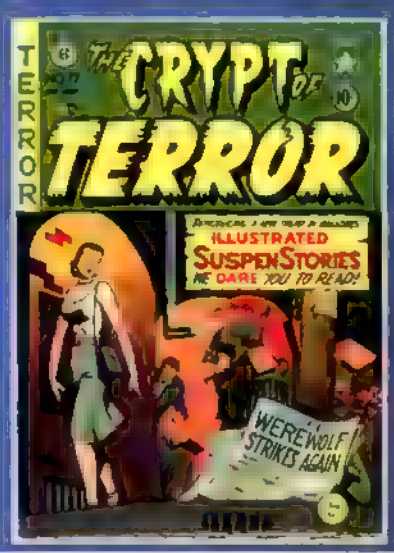
Eerie #1
January 1947
First Supernatural Comic
2011 *Guide* 9.2 Price: $8,500



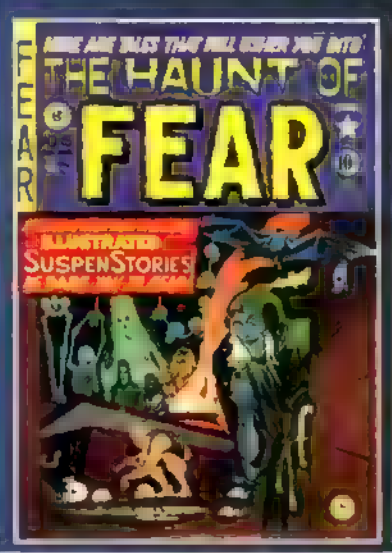
Tales of Terror Annual #1
1951
Cover by Al Feldstein
2011 *Guide* 8.0 Price: $6,600

Journey Into Mystery #1
June 1952
Cover by Russ Heath
2011 *Guide* 9.2 Price: $5,800

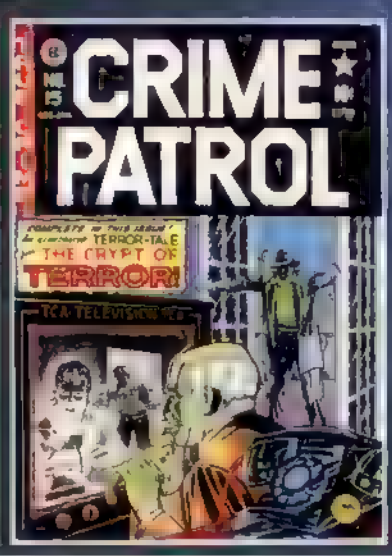
Strange Tales #1
June 1951
2011 *Guide* 9.2 Price: $5,500



The Crypt of Terror #17
April-May 1950
Tied for First Horror Comic
2011 *Guide* 9.2 Price: $5,200

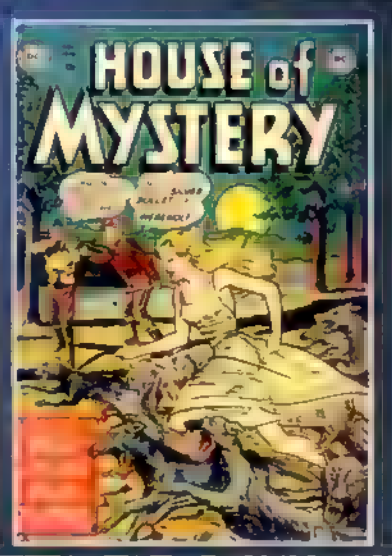


The Haunt of Fear #15 (#1)
May-June 1950
Cover by Johnny Craig
2011 *Guide* 9.2 Price: $5,100



Crime Patrol #15
January 1947
First app. of the Crypt Keeper
2011 *Guide* 9.2 Price: $4,700

Tales To Astonish #1
January 1959
Cover by Jack Kirby
2011 *Guide* 9.2 Price: $4,200



House of Mystery #1
Dec. 1951-Jan. 1952
DC's First Horror Comic
2011 *Guide* 9.2 Price: $3,900

For the latest prices on these comics – and about 300,000 other issues – check out *The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide* #42, on sale Wednesday, July 11, 2012.

Top 5 Horror Movie Posters

THE BLACK CAT
Universal Pictures, 1934
27" x 41" One Sheet (Style B)
Sold for $334,600 in 2009

Sales information and images courtesy of Heritage Auctions

THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN
Universal Pictures, 1934
27" x 41" One Sheet (Style D)
Sold for $334,600 in 2007

DRACULA
Universal Pictures, 1931
27" x 41" One Sheet (Style F)
Sold for $310,700 in 2009

THE BLACK CAT
Universal Pictures, 1934
27" x 41" One Sheet (Style D)
Sold for $286,800 in 2007

FRANKENSTEIN
Universal Pictures, 1931
27" x 41" One Sheet
Sold for $189,750 in 2004

Top 5 Money-Earning Horror Movies

There are, of course, very few clean, pure genres. For instance, is the *Twilight* saga really horror or is it more teen angst and romance with vampires and werewolves added in for seasoning? What about Disney's *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise? Sure, it's a bunch of pirate movies, but it's hard to deny its horror underpinnings. And what about the *21 Jump Street* movie? Okay, so that might be a tad off topic, but it's still scary that it got made.

What we're trying to say is that while we didn't include some would-be horror films in our list and included one that's sort of iffy (*Gremlins*), here's a look at the top-grossing horror films of all time at U.S. theaters, inflation-adjusted to make it fair.

ALL TIME RANK	TITLE	INFLATION ADJUSTED	ORIGINAL	YEAR
7	Jaws	$1,016,945,800	$260,000,000	1975
9	The Exorcist	$878,157,400	$232,906,145	1973
92	House of Wax	$401,223,400	$23,750,000	1953
112	Gremlins	$361,128,400	$153,083,102	1984
133	Psycho	$338,773,400	$32,000,000	1960

Source: BoxOfficeMojo.com

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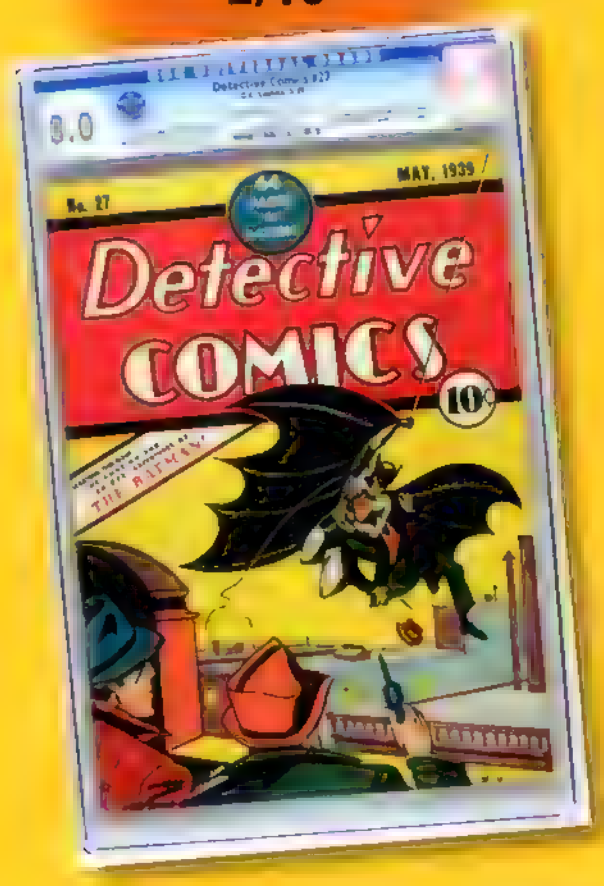

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$167,300!
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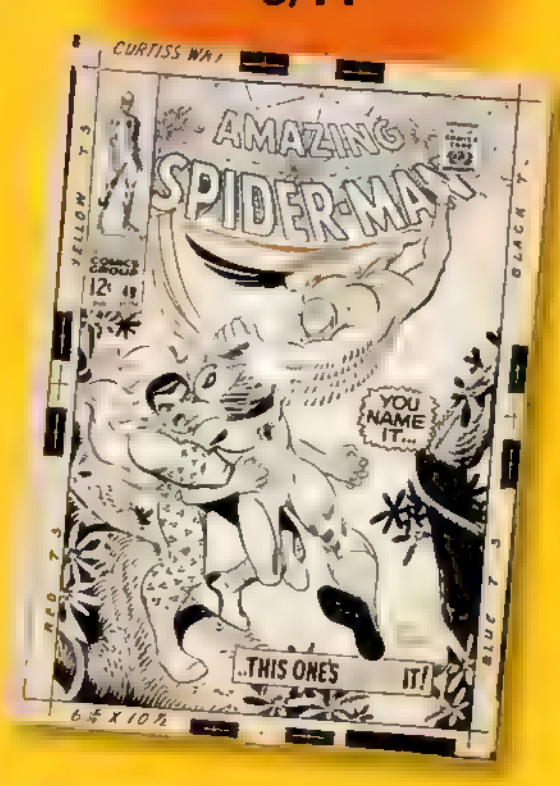

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GEPPI'S ENTERTAINMENT MUSEUM PRESENTS

OVERSTREET HALL OF FAME

WILLIAM M. GAINES

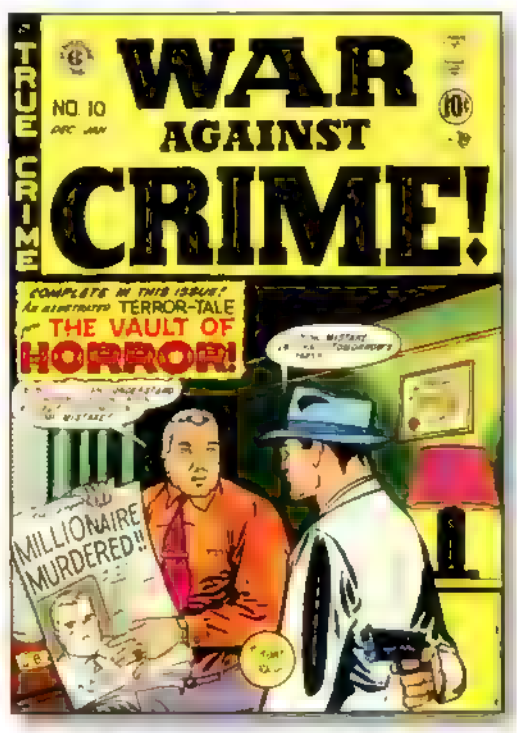
CRYPT OF TERROR #17
April-May 1950. © WMG

Best known on the national stage as the founder and publisher of *MAD* magazine, Bill Gaines suddenly found himself in charge of a floundering comic book company after the accidental death of his father, industry pioneer M.C. Gaines. Over the course of the next few years and in the course of trying to capture the latest trends, the younger Gaines published westerns, romances, and thrillers. Along the way, though, he began assembling an unparalleled roster of contributors, starting with writer-editor-artists Al Feldstein and Harvey Kurtzman and including Al Williamson, Jack Davis, Graham Ingles, Johnny Craig, Reed Crandall, George Evans, Wally Wood, John Severin and many others. With titles like *Tales From The Crypt*, *Weird Science*, *Two-Fisted Tales*, and *Shock SuspenStories*, in just a few years Gaines and company created titles that still influence other creators today. *MAD*, of course, became a cultural icon and did its own brand of influencing.

-J.C. Vaughn

INDUCTED 2009

EERIE #16
July 1968. © WP



WAR AGAINST CRIME #10
December 1949-January 1950. © WMG

WEIRD FANTASY #13 (#1)
May-June 1950. © WMG

THE BIRTH OF FOUR-COLOR HORROR

By Will Murray

Novelist, pulp author, radio writer and pulp culture historian Will Murray takes a look at the earliest successful horror titles in comics from the American Comics Group...

It seems amazing, but up until 1948, the comic book industry never offered a successful horror title until the American Comics Group released *Adventures into the Unknown* #1 that autumn. True, Avon had issued a one-shot called *Eerie* in 1947. It went nowhere. *Classics Illustrated* adapted *Frankenstein* and other supernatural classics, but those were exceptions.

The concept was the brainchild of Leo Rosenbaum, professionally known as Richard E. Hughes. He had scripted superheroes such as The Black Terror and Pyroman for Nedor during the early '40s, but by the close of the decade, superheroes were out. Comic publishers were groping for bold new directions.

In the ACG editorial saddle, Hughes had an idea. He was a fan of *Weird Tales*, and bought every Arkham House book being issued. Among his stable of writers was a survivor of the Lovecraft circle of writers, Frank Belknap Long, who was scripting comics in between writing horror and science fiction pulp stories.

With World War II over, and comic books no longer being sold through military PX newsstands in high quantities, the industry was fast losing the mature fan. Hughes wanted to hold onto those readers before they were lost forever. He convinced his publisher to take a chance on *Adventures into the Unknown.* Long scripted the entire first issue, which focused on the three main horror tropes—vampires, werewolves and haunted houses. The odd witch and zombie would later be added for variety. Edvard Moritz drew the moody first issue cover and some interior stories.

It was probably the worst time to launch such a project. Parents groups were already looking hard at the industry, upset over crime comics and associated violence. Predictably, after two issues, letters of complaints reached the desk of publisher Frederick Iger. Cancellation loomed for *Adventures into the Unknown.*

Frank Long reached out to Arkham House publisher August Derleth, asking him to pen a letter of praise about the at-risk title. Derleth did. It worked. Iger relented. The ghost would continue to walk.

As Long wrote to Derleth, "Extraordinary as it may seem, the magazine has sold *very well indeed!* It has vindicated the editor's judgment right up to the hilt. He believed that the real old-style ghost story, with the chill factor stressed to the utmost, would have a tremendous appeal to kids and adults alike. He felt that it would reach a much larger and slightly different audience, and was not deterred by the fact that pulp magazines in the weird field do not hit an impressive circulation high. He felt that straight ghost stories in pictures would appeal to kids—and apparently he was right, and how. There is a large audience for that sort of thing!"

ACG launched their line of horror comics with *Adventures into the Unknown* #1 (Fall 1948).

It didn't take long for other publishers to jump in with imitations. Most were schlocky, but EC Comics raised the bar with their line of well-produced, well-written titles, beginning with *The Vault of Horror* and *Crypt of Terror* in 1950. Horror became a hot comics trend.

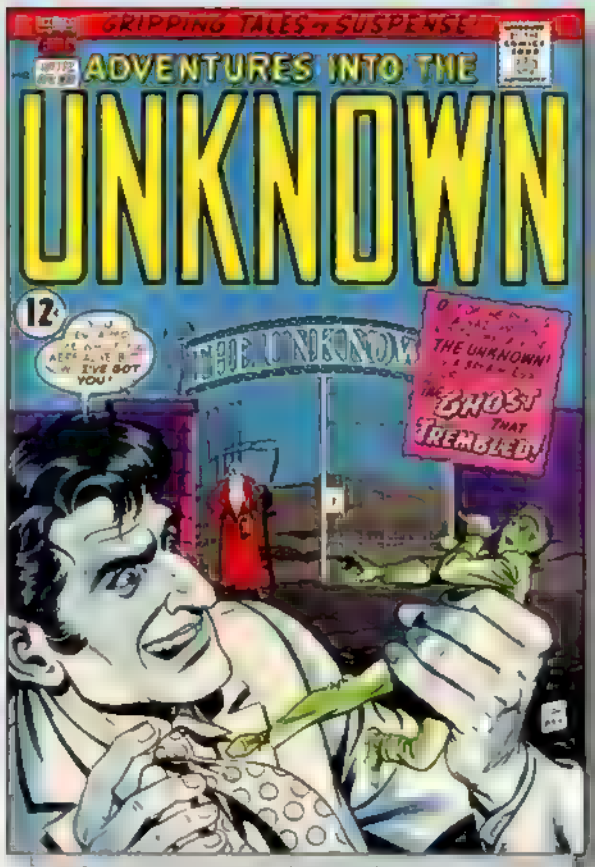
Too hot, as it turned out. By the time the Comics Code was implemented in 1954, most of the field was swept clean. With its restrained, traditional approach, the ACG line, which had grown to include *Forbidden Worlds,* managed to survive. Hughes was forced to abandon his formula of werewolves, zombies and vampires in favor of ghost stories and fantasy. He also ditched his writers, including Long and fellow *Weird Tales* contributor, Manly Wade Wellman. Readers howled for the return of raw vampirism and werewolfery, but Hughes was adamant. He had a new direction, and stuck to it, aided and abetted by star artist Ogden Whitney and others adept at portraying actual human beings, not malevolent monsters.

The stories produced during thus period borrowed as much from science fiction magazines as they did from *Weird Tales* or radio programs like *Inner Sanctum*, both fading from the scene as TV knocked out pulps and radio drama alike. Dinosaurs and time travel tales replaced the more extreme Code-forbidden creatures of the night. Witches were permitted, so they populated many issues. But ghosts in all varieties stepped into the spotlight and refused to be banished into the outer darkness.

Out of this era came a strange conceit. The ACG production department had been in the habit of coloring their apparitions a vapid green. Ghosts have to inhabit some realm, and since religion was a taboo topic in comics, Hughes—or one of his writers—cooked up an iron-gated community in the Great Beyond called the Unknown. It looked like a glorified cemetery, but came equipped with councils and overseers. As more and more stories delved into the afterlife and protagonists haunting or being haunted by their relatives, deceased or otherwise, all-knowing hooded specters symbolizing judgment represented the presiding powers in this non-denominational own. It was an intriguing concept that carried down through the final days of ACG.

Science fiction boomed in the days of the early space program, so for variety, tales of alien invasion, inter-species romance and other familiar concoctions grew more frequent as the 1950s progressed. Interwoven with those familiar fantasies, Hughes inserted, and probably scripted—numerous one and two-page supposedly true tales of supernatural experiences, culled from literature. Evidently, Hughes was no mere yarn-spinner, but a believer in the spirit world. And why not? He was making his living off it!

By the close of the 1950s, with sales flat but stable, Hughes began writing much of his own material under pen names like Ace Aquila and Lafcadio Lee. Curiously, this is when the true Golden Age of ACG came into being. The new editorial slant of sentimental human-interest supernatural and science fiction yarns brought forth such still fondly remembered classics as "There's a New Moon Tonight," "A Highly Localized Snowfall" and "A Machine Named Spotty," and the all-time reader favorite, "Heavenly Heavyweight." Most of these revolved around flawed or pathetic human beings caught up in moral dilemmas that could only be solved by an equal application of stern self-sacrifice and the supernatural. Letters poured in, praising Hughes under his many aliases. In 1960, he added a third title, *Unknown Worlds*. In practice, they were all interchangeable, but the best stories seemed to land in *Adventures into the Unknown* and *Forbidden Worlds*.



Adventures into the Unknown #172 (April-May 1967) with a ghostly cover by Kurt Schaffenberger.

Drawing upon industry talents such as artists Kurt Schaffenberger, Chic Stone, Paul Reinman, Pete Costanza, Steve Ditko and others, Hughes kept his books reader-friendly and professional. DC and Marvel cranked up their Silver Age of superheroes, leaving ACG with its own little niche of casual but committed readers.

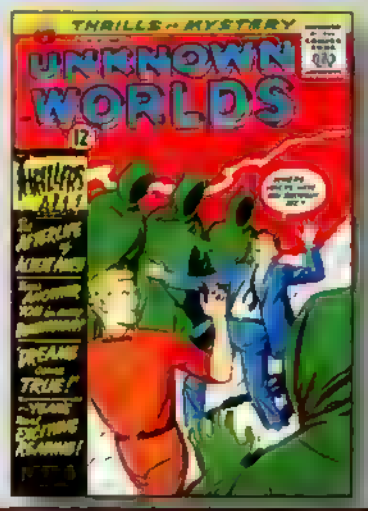
All seemed well until the rise of Batmania in the mid-60s. Readers with long memories began bombarding Hughes for the return of The Black Terror and other bygone superheroes. Hughes tried to hold the line, claiming his books were unique, and costumed heroes were a mere fad. He was half right. When he succumbed to publisher pressure to include two supernatural superheroes named Nemesis and Magicman into his top titles—preserving the relative purity of *Unknown Worlds*—sales spiked, then collapsed.

By the time Hughes restored the old formula, adding a new title, *Gasp!* the damage was done. Sales failed to rebound. The ACG line folded quietly in 1967, a victim of Batman. Hughes was forced to toil at answering complaint letters for a New York department store, while his top artist to the bitter end, Odgen Whitney, ended up in an asylum.

Adventures into the Unknown #27

Forbidden Worlds #11

Forbidden Worlds #103



Unknown Worlds #26

AND WHEN THE VAULT WAS

It was an oddly cold day in August 1989. The mist settled in among the Manhattan skyscrapers creating a spooky EC setting as Russ Cochran and I walked over to Bill Gaines' apartment from our hotel. It still seems like only yesterday when Russ called me with the news that Bill Gaines has decided to sell his EC collection. Russ would be handling the sale and I was needed to verify the collection and to arrange the copies of each issue by grade. We both knew that he had put away twelve copies of every EC 35-40 years earlier and sealed them away in boxes. Now the time had come to open those packages.

Thoughts were rushing through our heads about the significance of the day. We had many questions to be answered. We wondered what the condition would be like, how white the pages would be, if any issues would be missing, and if something new would be discovered.

We finally arrived at the Gaines' apartment at 10:15 AM. After clearing security, we arrived at his doorstep. Bill and his wife Anne cheerfully invited us in. Their apartment was like a curio shop, filled with mementos, souvenirs, and Statues of Liberty which they had collected for many years. Over to the right were bookshelves filled with bound ECs and *MAD*s. But what really caught our eyes was a genuine shrunken head sitting on the shelf (see the *Haunt of Fear* #8 cover). After gasping and choking for a second, we settled down around a large dining room table where the work would be performed.

In the closet were six large cardboard boxes which contained the ECs. The comics were wrapped in brown paper by issue number and sealed in the boxes. Before the comic books were handled, Russ and I put on white cotton film editor's gloves.

The first box was opened and the first package of comics was set on the table. We began with *Vault of Horror* #40 and worked backwards to *War Against Crime* #10. Russ cut open each package, counted the issues and handed them to me for arrangement by grade. Anne placed the ID labels on Mylar bags while Bill supervised.

After each stack was graded, Russ placed them in Mylar sleeves. At this point the copies were divided into two groups, one to be sold and one to be retained by Bill. Depending on shortages, Bill wanted to keep up to four copies for his personal use.

Legendary EC Publisher Bill Gaines during the evaluation of the Gaines File collection.

OPENED...

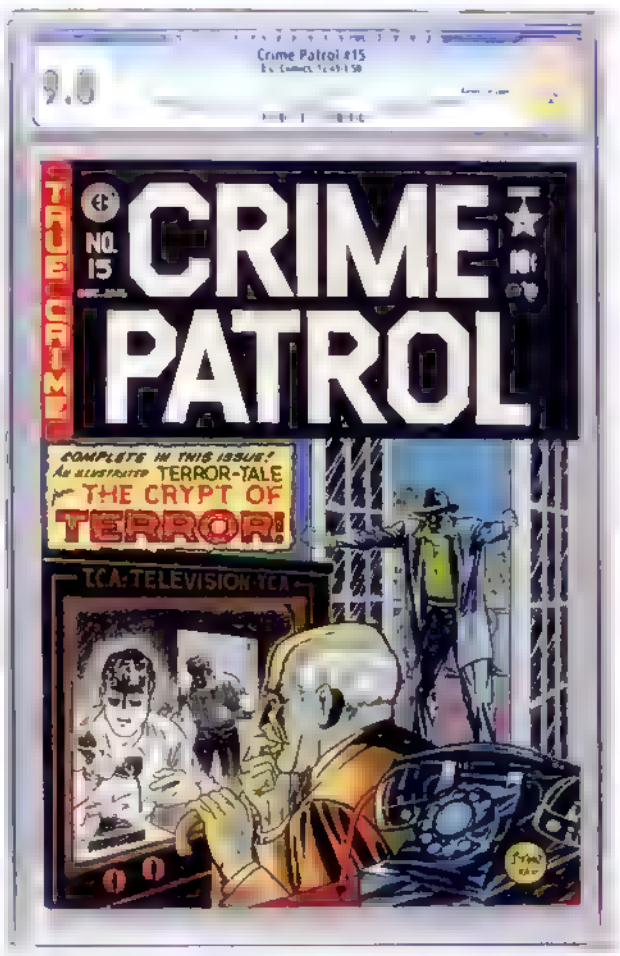
by Robert M. Overstreet with Gary M. Carter

It soon became apparent, after going through just a few packages, that we were seeing something out of the ordinary. The books were dazzling. They were essentially in brand new condition with full cover gloss and extra white pages. The cover colors were brilliant, with only a few exceptions. All of the noticeable defects either occurred during printing or trimming or the way they were wrapped. Some corners were bumped, and some issues were wrinkled.

We were disappointed to find no annuals or Pre-Trend comics, except for *War Against Crime* #10 and 11, and *Crime Patrol* #15 and 16. But we were surprised to find most all of the different versions of M.C. Gaines' books: *Picture Stories from the Bible*, *Science*, *American History* and *World History*. Some carried the All-American seal, some the DC seal, and others had the familiar EC seal.

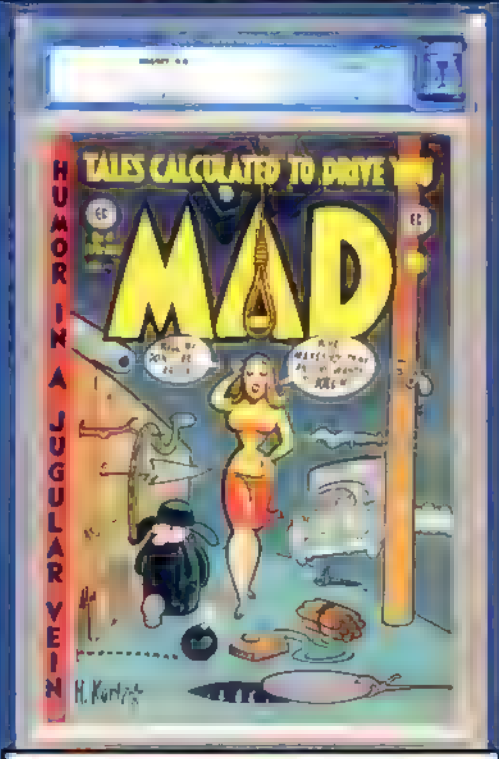
After opening a few of the packages and seeing the pristine condition of the books, we just had to check out their smell. The white pages and inks were still so fresh, that opening the books and smelling the insides swept us back to 1950. It was a smell we all remembered. Those of us who can recognize an Edgar Church Collection (Mile High) comic by its smell would have trouble distinguishing between it and the Gaines smell. It soon became obvious that we were looking at probably the best surviving sets of EC comics.

As a comparison, many of the Harvey file copies had brown edges due to the way they were stored. Some of the Dell file copies also had minor browning on the edges. Since the Gaines collection was never read, and

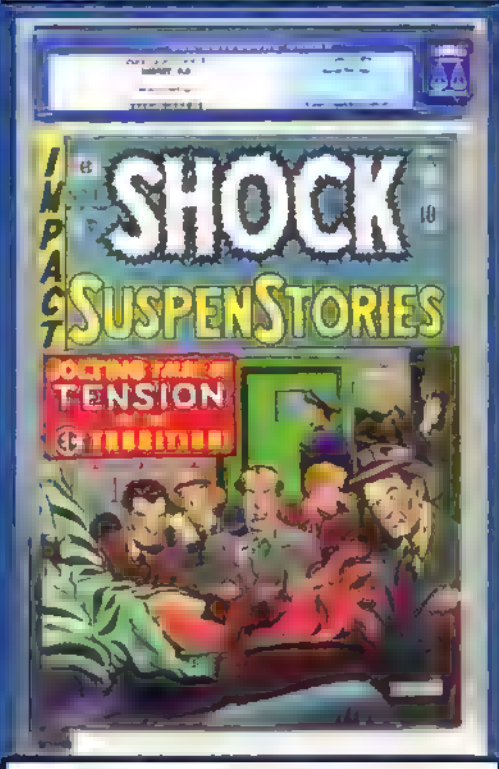


The Gaines File Pedigree is one of the most sought-after collections of comic books, with its high-grade copies selling for record prices. This ***Crime Patrol*** #15 CGC-graded 9.8 copy sold for $9560 in 2008.

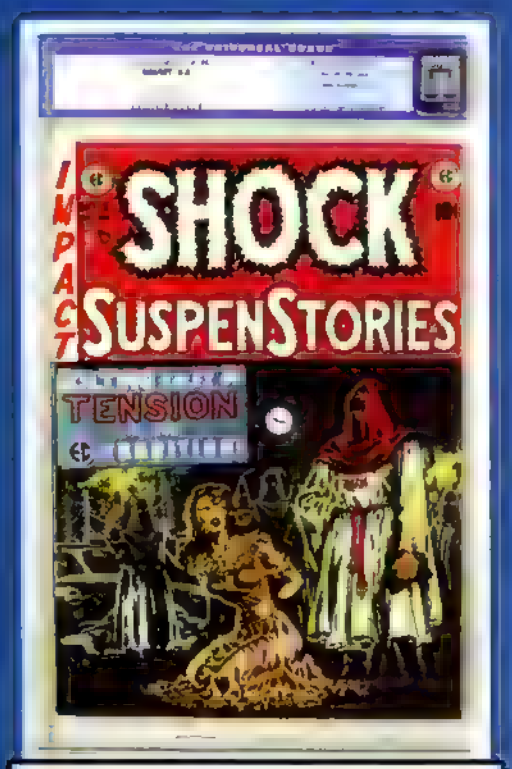
Haunt of Fear #17 (#3)
CGC-certified 9.6 copy
sold for $7475 in 2005.



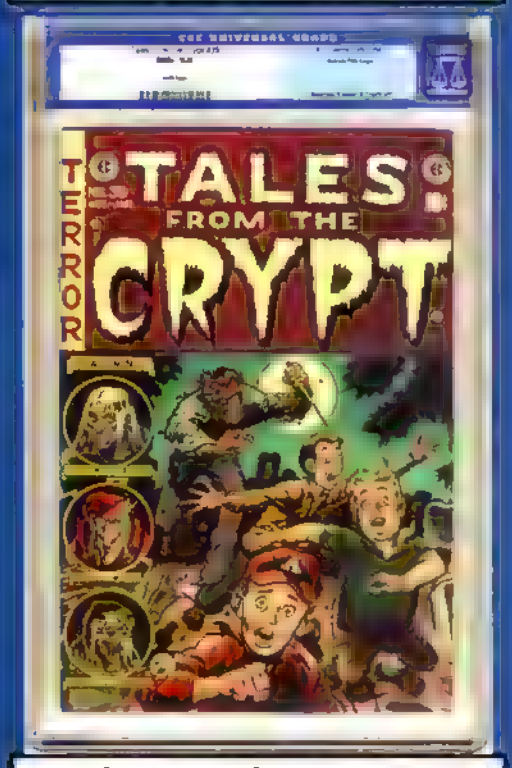
Mad #4
CGC-certified 9.8 copy
sold for $5750 in 2001.



Shock SuspenStories #1
CGC-certified 9.8 copy
sold for $5750 in 2004.



Shock SuspenStories #6
CGC-certified 9.8 copy
sold for $7170 in 2006.



Tales From the Crypt #39
CGC-certified 9.6 copy
sold for $2990 in 2002.

Vault of Horror #27
CGC-certified 9.8 copy
sold for $4887 in 2005.

Robert M. Overstreet evaluates a then-freshly opened issue of ***Frontline Combat*** #4, documenting the now legendary Gaines File collection.

was wrapped air-tight, the only comparable collection would be the Church collection. In the Dell and Harvey file copies there were issues missing from the runs, and in some cases there were probably as many as 100 copies of each issue.

Bill had remembered that there were twelve copies in each package, but we found that many had been opened, probably before Gaines moved to that apartment in 1961. We found that most issues did have twelve copies, but there were many packages that contained nine, ten, or eleven copies, and a few with only seven copies, and one issue with only one copy (*Vault of Horror* #12).

The work was tedious, the days were long, but they were filled with memories that we shall never forget. As we looked at these books, we traded stories about our memories of seeing each cover for the first time, and stories of how we tracked down that particular issue for our collections. Each day we played Christmas music and sang Christmas carols as we continued processing the mountain of unopened packages. At each day's end we returned to our hotel immersed in EC dust, Christmas Spirit, and childhood memories.

Longtime EC enthusiast, historian and publisher Russ Cochran with ***Frontline Combat*** copies from the Gaines File collection.

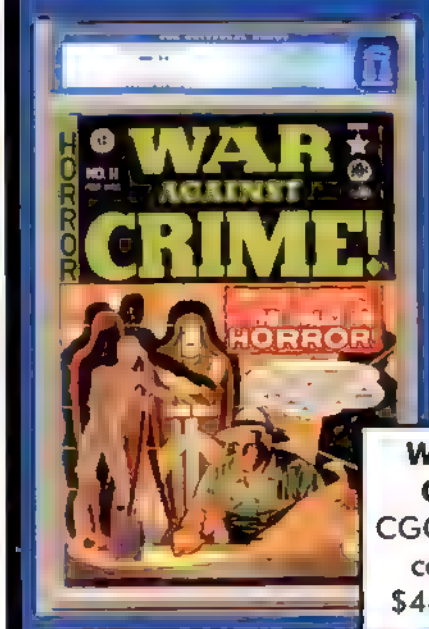
After spending a few days going through these books, Russ and I agreed that it was an experience that any EC fan would have enjoyed — the historic unveiling of the Gaines File collection. It was like opening 300 little time capsules that hadn't seen the light of day for 35-40 years. Being small-town collectors we both felt privileged and honored to be present at such a historic occasion. We hope that these notes will in some way make it possible for all other collectors and fans to have been there also.

On Friday, August 11, we processed *Vault of Horror*, *Tales from the Crypt*, *Haunt of Fear*, *Crime SuspenStories* and *Shock SuspenStories*. On Saturday, August 12, we did *Weird Science*, *Weird Fantasy*, *Weird Science-Fantasy*, *Incredible Science-Fiction*, all of the New Direction titles (such as *Valor* and *Impact*), *MAD* and *Panic*. On Sunday we were joined by Russ's daughter, Sylvia, and Angie Meyer, and we did *Two-Fisted Tales*, *Frontline Combat*, the 3-D comics, and the various *Picture Stories* series. The actual sets of books were put together Sunday afternoon, which finished the project.

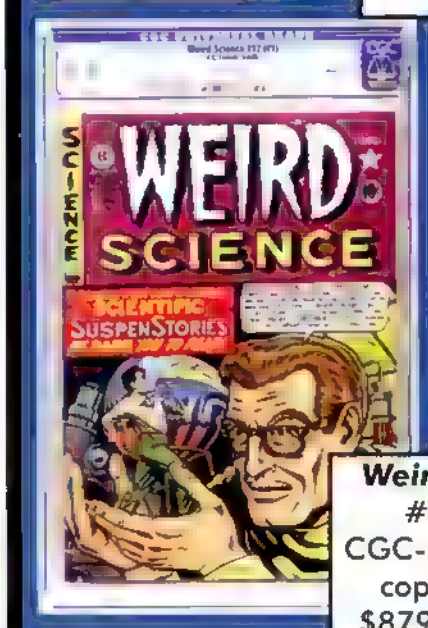
As an interesting footnote, we learned that *Impact* #1 was originally printed by Charlton Press. The printing quality was poor, so Gaines had the entire run destroyed, saving only one copy. It was then printed again and distributed to the stands.

Years later, of course, the Gaines File collection has become one of the most sought-after pedigreed collections of comic books. As has been documented in our Market Reports over the past few editions of the *Guide* and from the incredible success of Gemstone's *EC Archives* project, the interest in these classics shows no signs of waning now.

This article appeared in different form in Overstreet's Golden Age & Silver Age Quarterly *and* The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide *#38.*

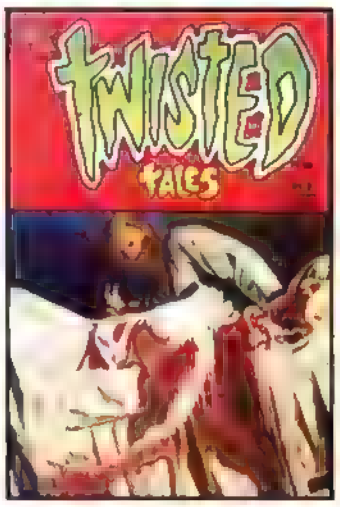


War Against Crime #11
CGC-certified 9.6 copy sold for $4600 in 2001.



Weird Science #12 (#1)
CGC-certified 9.6 copy sold for $8799 in 2006.

HORROR FAVORITES



Name: Shawn Caffrey
Occupation: Primary Grader, CGC
Favorite Horror Comic: *Twisted Tales*
Reason: Being a child of the late '70s/early '80s, but having a taste in comics that gravitated towards the likes of '50s ECs, my favorite horror comics series is *Twisted Tales*. The 10-issue Pacific/Eclipse Comics series left quite an impact on my young impressionable mind, and while Frederic Wertham would be surprised that it didn't lead me to a life of juvenile delinquency, it did however, introduce me to the world of the talented delinquent, Bruce Jones. His horror stories were so effectively written, scary, macabre and intelligent, and showcased some of the most influential artists in comics today at their finest.

Name: Bruce Canwell
Occupation: Associate Editor, The Library of American Comics
Favorite Horror Comic: "At the Stroke of Midnight" in *Tower Of Shadows* # 1
Reason: Juxtaposing "horror" and "comics" immediately makes me think of Jim Steranko's "At the Stroke of Midnight," from Marvel's *Tower Of Shadows* #1. No guts 'n' gore — just a creepy old guy, a hilltop manse, a very greedy couple, and a great final line: "Then … they began to scream!" Bravura pacing, superb text/art integration — Steranko at his most inspired!

Name: Ed Catto
Occupation: Founder, Partner – The Bonfire Agency
Favorite Horror Comic: *Adventure Comics* #435
Reason: As a superhero-loving kid, I never was that into the traditional horror comics. But there was always one standout for me - the creepy '70s Spectre series in *Adventure Comics*. The lush Jim Aparo artwork illustrated chilling, vengeful stories, each climaxing in a bad guy meeting a grisly fate. In #435, the Spectre stalks a criminal, turns him into wood and then runs him through a buzz saw!

Series Profile:
FLESH & BLOOD

By J. Kevin Topham-Ostrich

Monsterverse Entertainment, comprised of veteran artist Kerry Gammill (who serves as publisher and editor) and producer-writer Sam F. Park (West Coast editor), was created as a home for new horror comics projects. One of those projects, the graphic novel series *Flesh & Blood*, has taken off; it garnered praise from *USA Today* and was named Best Original Graphic Novel of 2011 by ComicMonsters.com, among other acclaim.

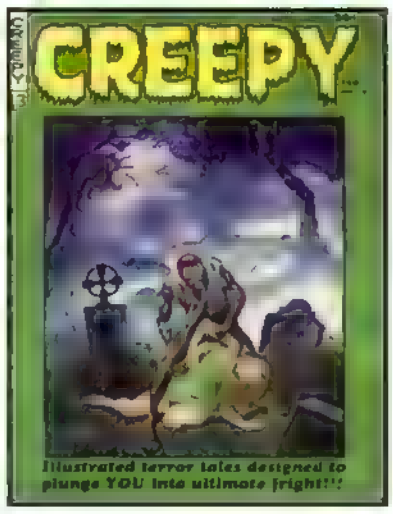
Created by writer Robert Tinnell (*The Living and the Dead*) and Neil Vokes (*The Wicked West*), *Flesh & Blood* is a love letter to some of the best known horror characters. Steeped in the tone of the Hammer Studios horror films that both Tinnell and Vokes grew up loving, the story does far more than aping previous attempts. It brings together celebrated horror characters in a way that makes readers say, "Why didn't someone do this before?"

Writer Robert Tinnell

"Neil and I wanted to do a couple things beyond play with the iconic characters of horror film and literature - although we both love to do

HORROR FAVORITES

Name: John Haines
Occupation: Comic Book Retailer (Comics & Friends)
Favorite Horror Comic: "The Upturned Stone" in *Heavy Metal*
Reason: My absolute head and shoulders above everything else favorite horror comic is *The Upturned Stone* by Scott Hampton, originally printed in *Heavy Metal*, circa 1993. Hampton both scripted and illustrated this story and it's a masterpiece. The reader instinctively feels a conscious sense of dread without really knowing why in this horrific coming-of-age story. The story takes place in late '60s North Carolina, where ghosts lurk at every corner - especially in the dreams of four young boys, who are the main characters, after they eat a pumpkin pie made from "the world's largest pumpkin" they found in a local graveyard. Brace yourself for the wordless three-page climax, which is sure to evoke dread, panic, loss, and pure terror. Five stars!



Name: Batton Lash
Occupation: Writer-artist-creator, *Wolf & Byrd, Counselors of the Macabre*
Favorite Horror Comic: *Creepy* #13
Reason: If I had to narrow it down, I'll go to my formative years, when I was an impressible 12 year old, when comics were hitting me at both a visceral and aesthetic level: *Creepy* #13.

I had just discovered the Warren horror magazines. I was familiar with most of the "staff artists" listed in the *Creepy* masthead, but it was a thrill to see them cut loose in a larger format, unencumbered by the Comics Code, especially Gene Colan, who was inking his own work. But the highlight of *Creepy* #13 remains "Second Chance," written by Archie Goodwin and drawn by Steve Ditko. A gangster descends into Hell — as only Ditko can draw it! The work Ditko did for Warren is right after his departure from Marvel and, I believe, represents the peak of his drawing abilities.

To this day, *Creepy* #13 brings back memories of gore, lunacy, murders, gouged eyeballs and stakes through the heart . . . so you've got to excuse me for getting sentimental!

that and have done it frequently in the past. But in particular we wanted to tap into the sensibilities of British horror movies of the fifties through the early seventies - as well as the Gothic literary sources themselves that informed those films. So while *Flesh and Blood* is a 'monster rally' it strives to be more than that. We're really trying to create a universe, populated by these monsters - these characters and classic storylines - and unify them in some overarching manner," said Tinnell.

He said they were torn between publishing the material as individual issues or a large graphic novel.

"After much discussion with Monsterverse we opted for a middle-ground. An affordable comic that isn't a monthly but also isn't a one-shot. *Flesh and Blood* will be a series of 104 pages volumes - each story is satisfying in that it can stand-alone - but is part of a larger arc or mythos," he said.

"The reviews have been off the charts. I mean, it's great when *Famous Monsters* or Ain't-It-Cool loves a horror book, naturally. But when *USA Today* praises it? That's new territory for us. However, as satisfying as the critics' reactions have been, it's the fan reaction that has blown me away. I've never gotten so much intense reaction to a book. Readers really love it," he said.

Tinnell said the next volume is due in May and it picks up where Volume One left off. Frankenstein is in a real jam. Van Helsing and the others are searching for him as well as plotting vengeance against the perpetrators of the devastating assault they suffered from the vampire hordes. A new enemy emerges to complicate things.

"There's lot of horror and action and, of course, Neil is drawing some gorgeous vampire women and Matt Webb's colors continue to captivate," he said. "And just wait until you see Dan Brereton's new cover – wow!"

HORROR FAVORITES

Name: John K. Snyder III
Occupation: Artist (*Doctor Mid-Nite, Zorro Rides Again*)
Favorite Horror Comic: *Creepy* #54
Reason: One of my favorite horror comic reading experiences was my first exposure to the work of Richard Corben in *Creepy* #54 (July 1973) "The Slipped Mickey Click Flip," written by Doug Moench, was unlike anything else I had seen up to that time, more fascinating than frightening, right away I wanted to see more of this style of horror story!

Name: Mark Wheatley
Occupation: Writer/artist/publisher
Favorite Horror Comic: *Creepy* #1
Reason: *Creepy* #1 is the monster of all-time great horror comics. Never have so many talented creators been impaled by shared staples in such a successfully conceived set of stories and art. Jack Davis, Angelo Torres, Russ Jones, James Warren, Archie Goodwin, Ben Oda, Reed Crandall, Frank Frazetta, Joe Orlando, Larry Ivie, Bill Pearson, Gray Morrow and Al Williamson! "Success Story" by Goodwin and Williamson is one of the very best horror comic stories ever created.

Name: Mark Zaid
Occupation: Lawyer/Collector/Dealer
Favorite Horror Comic: EC horror titles
Reason: I have always been drawn to 1950s EC horror comics. The artwork was fantastic and the historic role they played was revolutionary. These comics nearly led to the demise of the entire industry. Even after nearly seven decades it is not difficult to see why these books horrified parents. But they have a classic beauty to them that still resonates to collectors today.

Creator Profile:
JAMES KUHORIC

By Floyd Thursby

The humor-infused danger of Army of Darkness. *The multiple franchise juggling act of* Freddy vs. Jason vs. Ash. *The crushing circumstances of* Dead Irons. *The Grimm's Fairy Tales threats of* Legendary Talespinners. *Writer James Kuhoric has delivered all of these and quietly staked out a name as one of the top writers in horror comics today.*

He now serves as Vice-President of Publishing and Managing Editor for Avatar Press (a company that knows plenty about its own brand of horror). He talked with CBM *about what drew him to horror comics in the first place and what still grabs him about the genre.*

Writer James Kuhoric displaying his work to Freddy Krueger himself, actor Robert Englund.

CBM: You were a horror fan long before you started writing horror comics. What makes a good horror comic book, novel, movie or TV show?

James Kuhoric: Horror was in my blood at an early age. I can trace it back to a drive-in movie double feature of *Alien* and *Salem's Lot* when I was in second grade. When the Alien xenomorph popped out of Kane's chest, I thought I knew what it was to be truly terrified. I remember not wanting to put my feet down in the backseat of the car because I thought that slimy little creature could be under the seats…waiting. But it was the next feature when I saw vampiric Danny Glick scratching at the window and demanding to be let in that I was hooked for life. That was the end of sleeping through the night and the beginning of a lifetime affair with horror.

It is really hard to scare people today. The world can be a much scarier place than almost any you can dream up. Since fans and readers are so desensitized to it, I think we really just want to be entertained more than anything else. To me what makes a great horror story in any media is the ability to make the viewer relate to the characters, become involved in the story, and then get gut wrenchingly ripped by the events that transpire to and around them. We want to see the demonic possession and watch the jerk get carved up by the masked psychiatrist with the knife fetish. The more extreme the circumstances are, the better…as long as we get there with the characters naturally during the course of the storytelling and aren't led along with a sledgehammer plot. I want to be drawn in and know that something truly awful is going to happen…and there's nothing I can do but watch and cringe.

CBM: What were some of your early favorite horror properties?

James Kuhoric: I was lucky enough to grow up in a period that was ripe with some of the best horror films ever made – *The Exorcist, Friday the 13th, Nightmare on Elm Street, Texas Chainsaw Massacre, Halloween, Phantasm,* and so many more. At home I devoured the Hammer horror films on television. And at the theatres I found new and exciting ways to sneak into scary movies.

CBM: Was there a time when you looked at a horror comic and thought "I want to do this for a living?" or was it something more gradual than that?

James Kuhoric: I think it actually started with the joy of comic book reading as a child. It was the reading (and re-reading) of *Tomb of Dracula, House of Secrets, Tales of the Unexpected, Tales From the Crypt, The Witching Hour, Creepy, Eerie,* and the like that got my impressionable mind churning on how to survive against zombies, werewolves, witches, and vampires. It was during the countless hours spent daydreaming about the creepiest stories I read that I first imagined creating my own tales of terror. I drew mini-comics and shared them with friends who must have thought I was crazy back then. But I always knew some day I'd have a chance to tell those stories on a bigger scale. And I am thankful for every opportunity I've had to do so over the years.

CBM: You worked on other licensed properties like *Battlestar Galactica* and *Stargate: SG-1* before you got rolling on *Army of Darkness*. What are the ups and downs of working on licensed titles?

James Kuhoric: I love licensed comics, always have. It started with the first *Star Wars* comics from Marvel and just grew into one of my personal favorite genres to read. There is something about expanding the universe you know and love from film and television that really appeals to me as a reader. When I earned my first opportunity to contribute to expanding those worlds, I learned pretty quickly that there are rules for playing in other kids' sandboxes. Sometimes it doesn't matter how good your ideas are or if they reflect the attitude or themes of the source material. If the editors and legal teams feel the story is "too much for comic books," you'll be forced to compromise your vision. The trick to altering content to accommodate legal is to

make sure you don't take the easy way out. If you have to change it, start from the beginning and throw new crazy options at the wall. Inevitably something great will come out of it. You'll find a way to serve both masters and make the story the best it can be. The readers deserve something they will enjoy and add to their enrichment of the licensed universe.

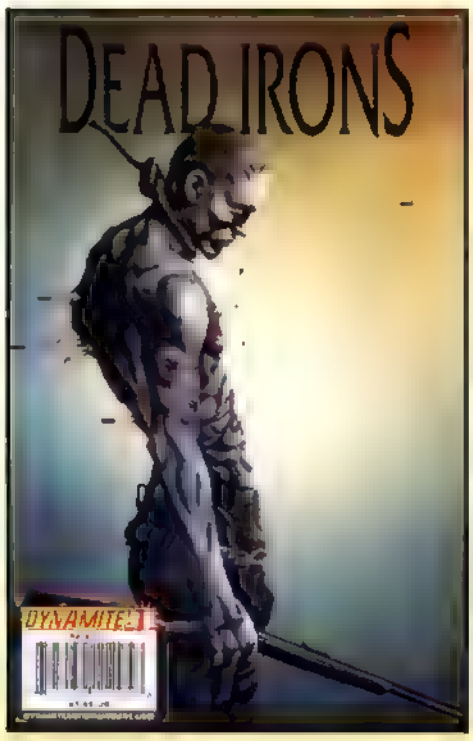
CBM: Based on the reviews, your stint on *Army of Darkness* really pleased a lot of *AOD* fans. Why do you think they connected with it?
James Kuhoric: I think the hardcore fans that really got what I was doing with *Army of Darkness* could see I was having fun with it. The *Evil Dead* trilogy is one of those series that shape the way you see horror and humor in film. I cherish those movies and watch them over and over. And it has meant more to me than any other licensed book to have a chance to contribute to them. Believe it or not, I think that actually is the answer to the success we had on *AOD* and to creating a good licensed comic book overall. The creators need to not only be familiar with the concepts, but they have to love them. It is obvious to any fan when you pick up a book based on something you cherish and the creative team turns out to be hired guns. It doesn't take a wise man to recognize when there's a primitive screwhead at the wheel.

CBM: Given the milieu of *AOD*, does doing a good job on that series just come down to understanding the character and voice of Ash, or is it something more than that?
James Kuhoric: The voice of the character is paramount. Nothing ruins an attempt at a licensed book faster than not being able to hear the character while you read. It is the most essential of factors that you have to nail to create a story the fans will connect with. I've read a lot of boring adaptations and expansions over the last thirty years and almost every one that was bad comes down to the characters not acting or talking like I expect them to.

CBM: You also had to juggle three different franchises in one miniseries with *Freddy vs. Jason vs. Ash*. One of the best comments we heard about your work on that one was that you managed to keep all of the characters in character and gave equal play to each of their worlds. How did you do that without short-changing one fanbase or the other?
James Kuhoric: Both *Freddy vs Jason vs Ash* series were a blast to work on and probably the most fun I've ever had trying to make a series play out the right way. I think one thing that helped me was that I was a huge fan of all three properties before starting the job. Like a lot of horror fans, I had followed the rumors of the *FvJvA* movie for years and had been daydreaming about what that would be like. That gave me a pretty good head start on how I would position the characters in the comic book version of the film. And having a chance to discuss the scenes with Jeff Katz, the man behind *Freddy vs Jason*, was an incredible benefit. Jeff's input into the characters and overall story was essential to making it feel like a movie on paper.

Army of Darkness #7 featuring Ash against yet another army of the undead.

The three horror icons pose in Eric Powell's cover for *Freddy vs. Jason vs. Ash #4*.



Dead Irons #1, with a cover by artist Jae Lee.

CBM: You created *Dead Irons*, a horror story with a distinctly western motif. How did that come about?
James Kuhoric: *Dead Irons* is a story about retribution at its core. It's a story about a man's loss, fear, pain, and personal tragedy. It's about the bonds built in childhood that sustain and that destroy. And the ugly scars of innocence lost that remain long after they are inflicted. I had that story formed from a very early age and influences like Clint Eastwood's *Man With No Name* and Christopher Lee's *Dracula* films helped me to tell it in a world where the supernatural collided with six gun justice. These were films that defined my world as a child and have enriched my imagination over the years. And it is thanks to my friend and incredible artist, Jae Lee, that those visions were realized in print. I can't thank him enough for believing in the series and for bringing my characters to life (or unlife depending on how you look at it).

CBM: You also created *Legendary Talespinners*, an almost-all-ages title with some a strain of horror in it. What led you in that direction?
James Kuhoric: *Legendary Talespinners* was a subject matter I've always been enthralled by — the power of storytelling. I've loved fables forever and wanted to have a way to tell a compelling story about imagination and belief in the fantastic. The horror elements in the story are those that you see in all Grimm's Fairytales. I set out to entertain kids with a new spin on the power of stories and to show them how potent imagination is. It was a wonderful project and working with Grant Bond and Nick Bradshaw to bring those vivid characters and landscapes to life was fantastic.

CBM: What do you have coming up?
James Kuhoric: There is a sequel to *Dead Irons* in the works that I'm very excited about. I have a few other creator owned projects in the works that bring me back to my horror roots as well. I'm really itching to get those visions out of my head and into the public consciousness. What good are nightmares if you can't share them with your friends?

Strange Fawcett Stories

By Pat Calhoun

Pre-Code horror took a long time to be fully appreciated by collectors of vintage comics. Since the early collecting focus was on superheroes, the pre-Code years (1950-1954) were seen as an awkward interregnum between the two heroic eras that define the Golden and Silver Ages. And this 'excluded middle' was dominated (in theory...) by EC Comics, which were grudgingly admitted as a bright spot in a dark time.

Pre-Code collecting gained a lot of ground in the early 1990s: Ernie Gerber's *Photo Journal Guide to Comic Books* made hundreds of seldom-seen covers, horror and otherwise, available for adoring viewing at any time. And the fan magazine *Comic Book Marketplace* (begun in 1991) helped put pre-Code on the map. My monthly column, "Weird Words," had as an undeclared mission statement the goal of showing that other brands of pre-Code horror gave EC a real run for their money.

Far more comics were sold in the pre-Code era (around 70 million a month) than in any before or since. Not only were these the most popular years for comics, but during this time horror-fantasy-science fiction was the most popular genre. Fawcett Comics, whose Captain Marvel was a giant of the 1940s, often outselling Superman, put their spin on the genre with a group of titles that consistently delivered excellent entertainment. While most other companies offered four or five stories per issue with a strong emphasis on "twist" (and twisted!) endings, Fawcett horror books usually featured three longer stories, with the color and excitement of the narrative events themselves presented in greater detail. They are very 'reader friendly'.

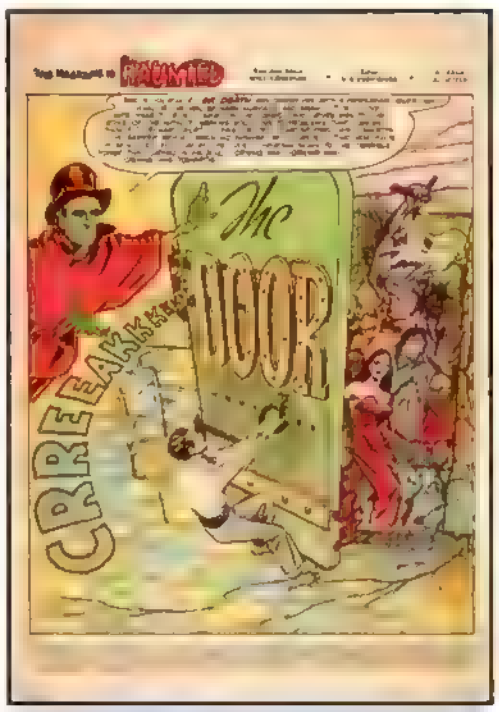
As to the personnel involved, Sheldon "Shelly" Moldoff tops the list. He had pitched the idea of a horror host to Bill Gaines in the late 1940s while working for EC, but Gaines deferred, although as soon as Shelly was gone he ran with the idea on his own. That's not to slam Gaines, business is business, and ripeness is all, but what happened, happened. At any rate Shelly approached the editors at Fawcett in 1951, and they agreed, which resulted in the first Fawcett horror comic, *This Magazine is Haunted* #1 (Oct 1951) featuring Shelly's fleshless front man, Dr. Death. Shelly drew most of the covers for the title, and usually illustrated a story inside as well.

Other cover artists include Norman Saunders, George Evans, and Bernard Baily. On interiors, one less-well-known name, Bob McCarty, did a lot of excellent work, and the redoubtable Bob Powell contributed some classics, with Evans and Baily drawing on the insides too.

Fawcett's second horror book, *Worlds Beyond*, followed the next month (Nov 1951, retitled *Worlds of Fear* with #2), and in mid-1952 three more titles were added: *Beware! Terror Tales* (#1 May), *Strange Suspense Stories* (#1 June), and *Strange Stories from Another World* (#1 titled *Unknown World* - June). Although Fawcett tended to go with particular artists for each title's covers - Baily did a handsome run on *Beware!* - the stories inside were more homogenous. *Beware!* was their only other title to feature a horror host; stories were introduced and narrated by 'The Mummy'. Without the framing devices and occasional interpolations the stories in those two titles were much like the stories in the other books. Dr. Death also hosted tales in the last two issues of *Whiz Comics* (the anthology home of Captain Marvel) #154 April and #155 June 1953.

Highlights of Fawcett's five fantasy titles include two stories that were recently anthologized in a fifties horror retrospective (*Four-Color Fear* by Greg Sadowski) and the savvy editor picked them because they are two towering masterpieces. "The Slithering Horror of Skontong Swamp" is an

Fawcett cross-promoted their horror titles with full-page house ads- often on both inside covers in black-and-white and on the back cover in color. This one shows 'The Mummy' holding court over some bizarre blobby sea-folk.



***This Magazine is Haunted* #12** (August 1953) Al Eadah turned in the job of a lifetime and chose wisely because the super script helped him achieve spectacular results, including great use of the Fawcett 'screentone' ghosts (some can be seen in the splash panel).

eleven-page magnum opus of George Evans art whose lurid realism creates some of the most ghastly ghosts ever to slither, perfectly wedded to an elegant example of Fawcett's incident-rich story style. This landmark yarn was cover feature in *This Magazine is Haunted* #5 June 1952. And the eight-page "Wall of Flesh" where the always-pleasing Bob Powell outdoes himself in the service of a superb script is everything a weird story should be: it graced *This Magazine is Haunted* #12 August 1953. The #12 is notable in that it contains another classic story fully the equal of the two aforementioned, "The Door." This eleven-pager is a stellar performance by Al Eadah, who takes advantage of another really strong script. The wonderful full-page slash panel (a Fawcett fixture- especially on the lead story) is reproduced for your delectation.

Beware! Terror Tales #3 September 1952 has it all: nice Baily cover, Moldoff cooking on the opener, McCarty sizzling in the middle, and a fine finale. Awesome painted covers by Norman Saunders enhance all five issues of *Strange Stories from Another World*. The covers of #4 (Dec 1952) and #5 (Feb 1953) are particularly brilliant, and both issues each have solid stories drawn by Moldoff and McCarty at the top of their game. *Worlds of Fear* #10 (June 1953) features the famous "eyeballs" painted-cover classic by Saunders, and Dr. Death makes a title-jumping appearance as narrator inside.

The remaining issues (Fawcett published 42 horror comics) are readable and enjoyable - they always aimed to please and usually hit the mark. Many of the stories feature spectral figures drawn with a "screentone" effect, a nice trademark touch that unifies the works of various artists.

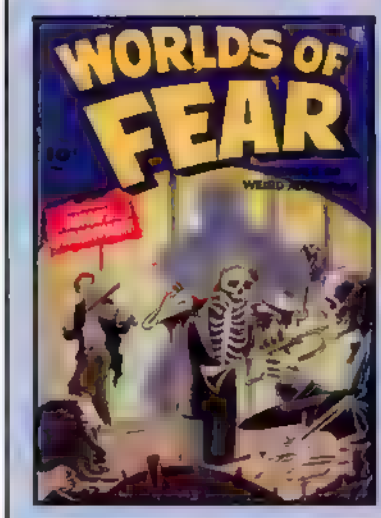
The Fawcett horror titles offered compelling product on magazine racks crowded with competition. The thing that set them farthest apart from the others was the manner of their demise. The pre-Code years boasted all-time-high sales because most everyone read comics back then, and it was the adult horror, crime, and war getting mixed in with kid stuff that fueled the brouhaha leading to the comics self-censorship (begun in late-1954) that decimated the industry. But in 1953 everyone from long-established publishers to little fly-by-nights wanted the party to go on as long as it could and were determined to stick around and get while the getting was good. However, Fawcett quit at the peak, with their last horror comic (mayhap their last comic as well) *This Magazine is Haunted* #14 dated December 1953.

Heretofore it has been surmised that the DC versus Fawcett, Superman versus Captain Marvel ongoing lawsuit was the main reason they bowed out of comics. But while it was a factor, an updated viewpoint can only praise the acumen and accuracy of their business decision. The wise realized the party would not last forever... And Fawcett at the time was riding the runaway success of their Gold Medal paperback line which featured original novels rather than the reprints that comprised most previous paperbacks. So seeing the writing on the wall, and having this other project an up-and-coming moneymaker, made the costs of the DC lawsuit an excuse to exit comics a little early. Certainly the impact Fawcett made with horror comics in their truncated pre-Code time frame surpasses that of most of the companies that stuck it out to the bitter end.

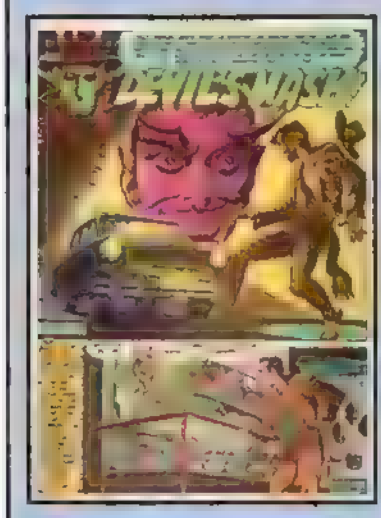
Pat Calhoun collects and writes about weird literature and figurines with an emphasis on ten-cent comic books. He lives in an old house full of stuff in Santa Rosa, California.

Strange Suspense Stories #3
(October 1952) George Evans contributed an effective cover and the 12-page lead story. The headless chap makes an appearance in "Port of Terror" with art by Bernard Baily.

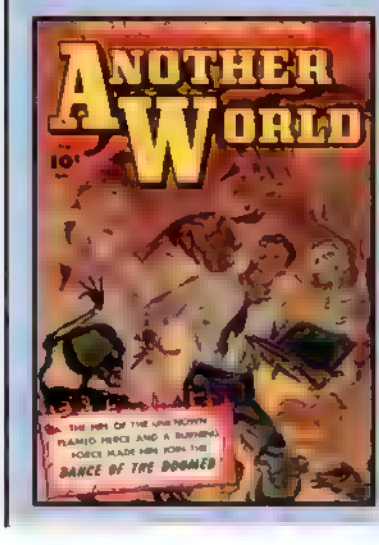
This Magazine is Haunted #7
(October 1952) Here's some science gone awry on a cover that looks like Shelly's art: it certainly radiates that eerie atmosphere that we associate with pre-Code horror.



Worlds of Fear #7
(November 1952) Sheldon Moldoff comes through with some creepy composition and coloring on this engaging cover. Bob McCarty's art on the 12-page lead story, "Journey Into Chaos," helps make it a wild ride.



This Magazine is Haunted #9
(February 1953) A vivid sample of Bob McCarty's work, the "Devil's Mask" story is an utterly predictable chestnut, but the all-out effort on the art makes it a pleasure to read.



Strange Stories from Another World #5
(February 1953) This incredible painted cover by the great Norman Saunders speaks for itself... And there are some good stories inside too. The title ended on a high note, as this was the final issue.

HEY, Have you read...?

By Mark Squirek

Our *Scoop* columnist takes a look at some horror greats that might be easy to overlook.

House of Mystery

DC Comics

Beginning in the early 1950s, this memorable anthology was never known for pushing the limits of cruelty or horror, but it is fondly remembered by many for its ability to present solid horror stories with a somewhat softer side. The first issue showcased a barefoot beauty running across the field with a pack of werewolves as the man who loves her is holding a rifle zeroed in on her flowing locks. Other stories in that first issue include "Man or Monster" and "The Curse of Seabury Manor." For a few years this title was home to the Martian Manhunter, but horror returned as host character Cain moved into the house. *House of Mystery* #290 introduced "I, Vampire." The title location lived on in eternity as a location in the Dreaming during Neil Gaiman's *Sandman* series.

Ghost Comics

Fiction House

Ghost Comics was one of the milder horror titles that started showing up in the early fifties. Like *House of Mystery* over at DC, it steered clear of the wilder storylines and stayed closer to a simpler, gentler type of horror. As a publisher, Fiction House tends to be forgotten by many because they never came up with a real hit and they were never as adventurous as other publishers. But they did have one thing: some of the best drawn women who ever appeared on a comic book cover. From the magnificent Lily Reneé's work on "The Werewolf Hunter" and "Senorita Rio" to Matt Baker's "Sky Girl," Fiction House knew what would attract young men on the newsstand. Every one of Ghost Comics eleven issues portrayed a woman in danger from maniacs, ghosts or the undead.

Web of Evil

Quality Publishing

As early as 1930, Everett M. Arnold and his printer were looking to use color plates (a big investment at the time) so they could do comic books. Over the next twenty years he published such family fare as *Feature Funnies*, *Smash Comics*, *Hit Comics* and *Military Comics*. He brought in Will Eisner (and The Spirit). In short Arnold published "good" titles. When the 1940s ended and tastes changed, Quality Comics only had one horror title, but it was a doosey; *Web of Evil* featured electrocutions, opium, witches, demons, ghosts and an acid-in-the-face story. It also had Jack Cole. Comic historians hold him responsible for at least sixteen stories that appeared in the title, the most notable of which might be "The Man Who Died Twice" in issue #5. The glee on the criminal's face is enough to inspire nightmares.

Chamber of Chills

Harvey

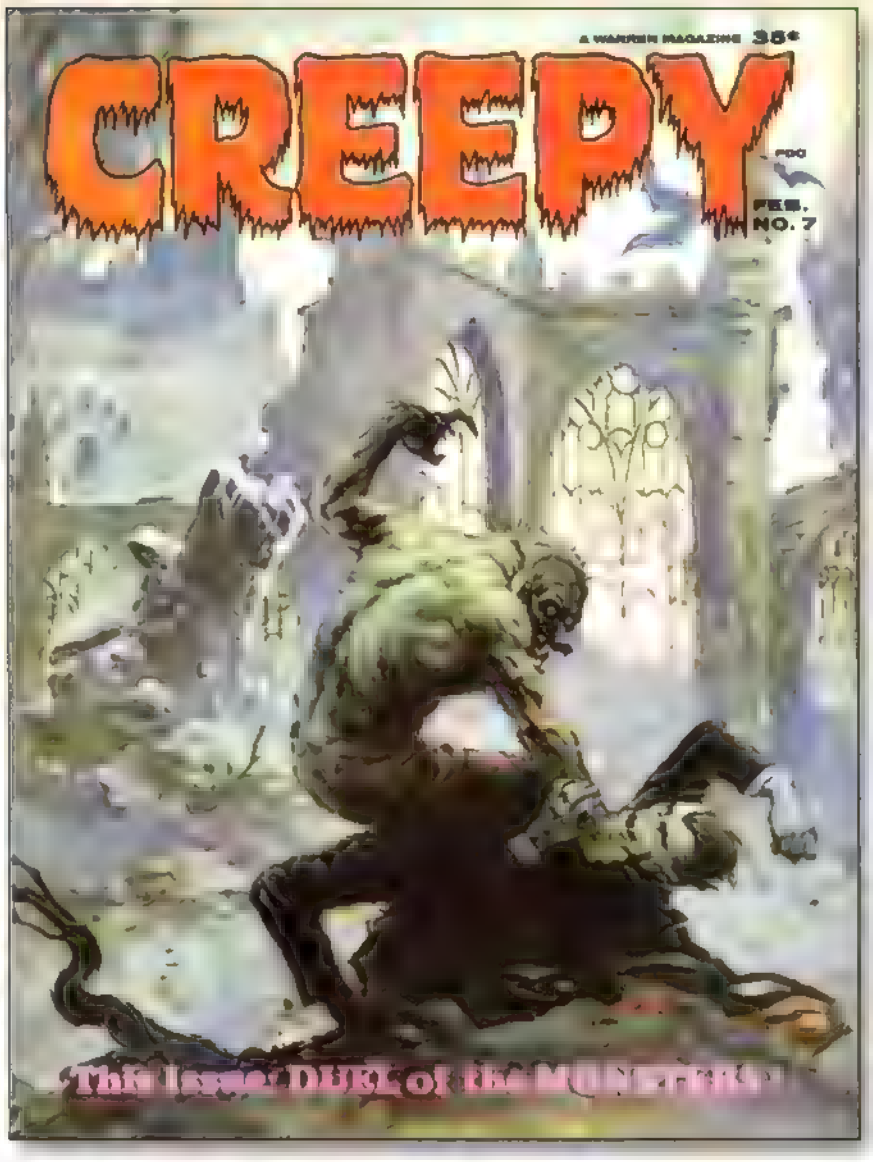
Casper is a friendly ghost; he may be friendly but he is still a ghost. And that fits in perfectly with the secret history of Harvey Publishing. The company is world famous for their lovable children's titles, but in the early fifties they were like any other comic book publisher, they were scrambling for an audience. *Chamber of Chills* took over the numbering from Harvey's *Blondie* title with #21. Issue #25 saw the addition of the word "magazine" to the title with the numbering going backwards to five, but it was the same book. Harvey had three other horror titles, *Black Cat Mystery*, *Tomb of Terror* and *Witches Tales*. Scantily clad women roasting in the fires of Hell, severed heads, rotting faces, bondage, corpses and mummies, *Chamber of Chills* had them all, which is why it is the most notorious of all of Harvey's horror titles.

You can find more of Hey, Have You Read...? *Weekly on* Scoop *at http://scoop.diamondgalleries.com.*

GEPPI'S ENTERTAINMENT MUSEUM PRESENTS

OVERSTREET HALL OF FAME

ARCHIE GOODWIN



CREEPY #7
February 1966. © WP

Ask the average fan to name the greatest creators in the history of comics and the name Archie Goodwin will not leap to the minds of many, because so much of Archie's brilliant work was behind the scenes or flew under the mainstream radar. But ask the creators with whom he worked! Ask other all-time great writers, artists, editors and creators! Gather the elders, the best of the best and ask them! His name will be among the first mentioned. Archie Goodwin was an amazing writer with outstanding story sense, penetrating insight, a gift for dialogue, an effortless knack for character, a flair for drama and utter mastery of the art of delivering the payoff. His sheer creativity ranks with the best ever. He was an all-time great editor and teacher. He made everyone he worked with better. On top of that, Archie Goodwin was a fine, wonderful, noble and honorable soul, loved and respected by everyone because he deserved it. This industry may never see his like again. How sad. He is desperately missed.

- Jim Shooter

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The Semi-Secret Origin of Comic Book Marketplace

By J.C. Vaughn

In 2011, Comic Book Marketplace *celebrated its 20th anniversary including its first new issue in the last few years (our Atlas-Seaboard special), and that provoked a lot of thought about how the publication got started in the first place.*

None of it would have happened without the insights, hard work and vision of Gary M. Carter, the founder of Comic Book Marketplace *and the publications' longtime editor and head cheerleader. For 83 issues (and some specials), Carter brought together professional writers and dedicated amateurs in pursuit of comics history.*

More often than not, they found it.

During his tenure as Editor at Overstreet Publications, Carter was silly enough to repeatedly pay J.C. Vaughn, now Associate Publisher, as a freelance writer. That sort of thing only leads to more and more articles, so it seemed only right that they talked about the early days of CBM.

CBM: What gave you the impulse to do *Comic Book Marketplace* in the first place?

Gary Carter: *CBM* really started with my simple love for the medium of comic books (begun at the tender age of five) and ultimately my keen interest in collecting them (started at age seven). Credit also goes to Bob Overstreet and [Gladstone publisher] Bruce Hamilton for encouraging and helping with the initial idea early on (in early 1991) and especially my wife, Lisa Carter's amazing contribution through the first 80+ issues.

I suppose I should also credit the original *Rocket's Blast-Comic Collector* (Biljo White) and the *Buyer's Guide* from Alan Light for planting the "psychic seed," so-to-speak. I also believed that many of the original fanzines went part way towards memorizing the history of and artistic personalities associated with the medium of comics... but I wanted to take the next step combing the elements of history, rarity, value, market forces, and especially the "sheer and unadulterated love of comics and collecting." *CBM* was my attempts at expressing those elements. It also provided a wonderful opportunity to create community around the hobby... which I feel we did in a positive way.

Anyway, that's how I remember it as I look back 20 years ago.

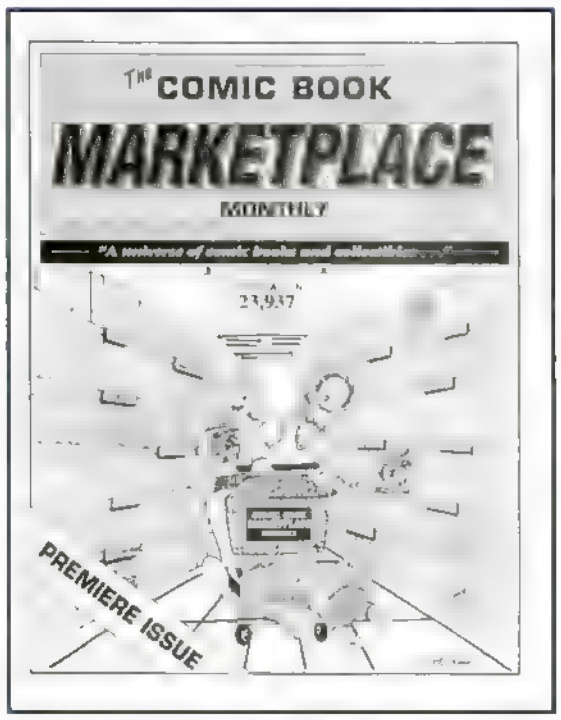
CBM: How did Bob and Bruce encourage you?

Gary Carter: Right from the start I asked them about ideas. They were already seasoned and savvy publishers in their own right. When I finally decided to "take the plunge," Bruce allowed me to mail *CBM* #1 to his huge (22,000 plus) mailing list... and Bob helped me a great deal with *CBM* #2.

I want to also credit Pat Calhoun as a (the?) key plank-holder in the *CBM* story. We had collected together since childhood, and without his influence, guidance, contributions, and support there would be no *CBM*.

CBM: Was there a seminal moment or event that sparked you to say "I can do this!" or was it more that there was a niche that demanded to be filled?

Gary Carter: I guess it was one of those intersections of fate and event. I was ready, Lisa was ready, Pat was available... and I was kind of "bursting" with enthusiasm for the hobby, combined with my deep interest in the history of the medium. I kept seeing so many of the early greats of the industry leaving us with no documentation of their lives and/or contributions. I felt an urgency to document while they were still around to tell us their stories. Plus I wanted to do something that might confer more credibility on a hobby that was [for decades] the object of ridicule by the mainstream. I wanted to make sure that comic historians and comic creators (especially Golden Age and Silver Age) were credited with their great accomplishments and contributions. I also wanted to find a way to add credibility to an already-thriving marketplace. I tried to make sure every issue under my editorship clearly communicated these ideas. You may recall that I often said in those early days of *CBM*, "When a magazine doesn't know what it is, neither do its readers." For 80 issues or so, *CBM* pretty much knew what it was.



The pages of ***Comic Book Marketplace #1*** brought a "sheer and unadulterated love of comics and collecting." to the newsstand.

CBM: The change in appreciation by the culture at large is so huge that it's difficult sometimes to keep it in perspective. Certainly others had been doing their own take on it, but when you (and various contributors) started reaching out to veteran comic creators, what was their level of surprise

that people were interested?
Gary Carter: Many were quite surprised, and many deeply touched by the fact that so many hobbyists and collectors held them in such high esteem. There were actually occasions when I would approach with a request for an interview and they would get a bit misty-eyed over the prospect. I was especially gratified when I would [ultimately] present them with the newly-printed *CBM* issue that featured them... they almost always wanted extra copies to send to friends and relatives. We were always happy to provide as many copies as they needed.

CBM: Who could you site as examples of creators who were surprised by the attention?
Gary Carter: Creig Flessel and Vin Sullivan to name a few... There were others as well. One of the more humble folks, especially considering the breadth of his talent, was Murphy Anderson. What a gracious man... and what a remarkable history in the field.

I also really enjoyed interviewing Gil Kane, Russ Heath, and Joe Kubert, among others. And perhaps the most exciting interview of all (at least in the top three) was Julius Schwartz. Can't say he was humble – he had a lot not to be humble about – but what a great guy, and could there be a more impressive comic book resume than Julie. I can't think of one. It was such a privilege to get to interview so many great creators over the years, I think mostly because their work meant so much to me personally.

Comic Book Marketplace #28 (October 1995) featured this dynamic cover of The Shadow by the legendary Jim Steranko.

CBM: How long did it take you to get into a production routine with the magazine?
Gary Carter: The first five issues were done on a PC. *CBM* #6 on we used a Mac... so I would say about five issues. We spent many late hours (often all night) learning software programs and doing "paste-up." We also had to create half-tones of all covers and other graphics using a Hasselblad medium format camera. (I think if I recall my camera trivia correctly, it was invented by a guy from Sweden named Victor Hasselblad, which always reminded me a little of Victor Frankenstein.) Anyway, its a giant camera. Before we used scans, we photographed everything as actual size and as a half-tones. Then we'd bring all the film home, cut it to size, and paste it on the sheets. Then we'd go back to the printer and photo all the sheets to make film of the pages and signatures. Then the strippers would set up the film to make plates. Then after plates were created, they be mounted and the presses would roll. It was quite involved but a great learning opportunity about how images and print and color make it to a printed page.

To this day, I still get a feeling of excitement when I visit a printing operation... I especially enjoy the smell of ink and the feel of fresh rolls of ultrabrite newsprint. I guess publishing and printing really stay with you... I think because there's an incredible amount of work and know-how that goes into every issue... plus when you finally get to stand at the end of the bindery line and hold the completed magazine in your hand... wow, there's just nothing like it. I used to say occasionally that it was like seeing your child born... except you got to do it once a month [laughter].

I should also say that the real credit for most of the production goes to Lisa (Carter)... She was the one with the greatest understanding of layout and color... plus she has an amazingly short learning curve on all things artistic. Pat Calhoun was also a critically important member of the early team... and usually never gets the credit he deserves. Likewise Michael Naiman...

One can look at the early *CBMs* and watch the changes from issue to issue.

CBM: When did you feel like you really hit your stride with early *CBM*?
Gary Carter: Just after issue #13. A friend (Bill Howard) put us in touch with Joe Sikoriyak, a brilliant designer and artist who had worked with Disney among others. He drastically expanded Lisa's and my thinking about content, layout, graphics... even software programs. We also began to upgrade cover stock and finish, interior stock, and ultimately added a color section... even changed the cover logo. The "new" *CBM* lasted until #21 when I began work at Overstreet, around January of 1993.

As an aside, during those twenty months at Overstreet I did find a way to create a magazine like *CBM* (with Pat Calhoun's help)... it was *Overstreet's Comic Book Quarterly*. To this day, most collectors/readers consider those six issues of the *Quarterly* from '93 and '94 sort of like *CBM* #21a through #21f. When Overstreet Publishing became part of Gemstone, Steve Geppi was kind enough to suggest that we continue *CBM* as a Gemstone publication (back in California) and start up again with #22. That's just what we did... and that's why there's a time gap between *CBM* #21 and #22.

A whole lot (I mean a *whole lot*) of credit is due Pat Calhoun, Michael Naiman, and Michelle Nolan... as well as a myriad of authors/collectors who contributed their research and passion for little compensation. They wrote and researched because of their love of the medium, its artists, and its history.

Look for more with Gary Carter about the history of* Comic Book Marketplace *in The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide #42, on sale July 11, 2012.

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